Special Double Issue
Lilith #12-13 $4.50
Winter/Spring 1985/5745

THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

Lilith

special double issue

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New Writing by Jewish Women
Fiction & Poetry
on Love, Guilt, Separation, Art, Responsibility and more...

A Special Survey on Jewish Women and Work
Cynthia Ozick on Feminism and Judaism

The Women's Gallery

GAY BLOCK

There is a very special section of Miami Beach known as the South Beach. Beginning at 15th Street and going down to 5th Street, on Collins and Ocean Avenues, retired people in their 80's and 90's live in the small hotels built in the 30's.

They have created their own small town in the South Beach, almost like the *shtetls* (townlets) from which many of them came. They sit on their porches or in the park at the beach, all day and all evening, singing, talking, sewing, playing cards, napping, arguing, feeding pigeons, reading.

The first time I saw these old timers, I was riding down Collins Avenue at dusk in April, 1982. I saw them sitting on their hotel porches, talking and watching the street life. Two hours later, after my dinner, they were still sitting there, I stopped to talk with the people on one porch and I fell in love with them. I spent time with these people for two more seasons and discovered why I had felt that love at first sight.

This special issue of LILITH *was made possible in part through a grant from the Newman Incentive Awards Program of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.*

THE COVER: Charlotte Salomon was a 21-year-old art student in Berlin when the terrors of Kristallnacht (the Nazi pogrom of November 1938) led her father and step-mother to send her to what they thought was a safe refuge with her grandparents in the South of France. After her grandmother committed suicide, and her grandfather revealed that Charlotte's mother had also killed herself, Charlotte felt she could either take her own life or do "something undreamt of." What she created over the course of two years' time was an autobiography in 769 paintings, which she divided into acts and scenes, thus elevating her life into theatre. Before being deported to Auschwitz, where she perished in 1943, she entrusted a body of work to a resident of her village; it is now at the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam. On the cover is one of her paintings from the book *Charlotte: Life or Theatre, an Autobiographical Play,* published by Viking Press in association with Gary Schwartz of the Netherlands, © 1981.

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE #12/13

Lilith

WINTER/SPRING 1985/5745

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LILITH is named for the legendary predecesor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam. After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her "Lilith," Adam said, "You are fit to be below me and I above you." Lilith said, "We are equal because we both come from the earth."
(FROM *THE ALPHABET OF BEN SIRA, 23A-B)*

*THE PREPARED TABLE *(the Shulchan Aruch)* is the authoritative code of Jewish behavior according to *halacha* (law). As Jewish feminists continue to rediscover and rework Jewish practice, the Contents of *LILITH* may serve as an evolving Prepared Table for a new code of behavior.

ISSN No. 0146-2334

From the Editors

NERVOUS ABOUT NAIROBI

As preparations for the UN "end-decade" conference on women reach their final stages, Jewish women around the world are responding with a mixture of hopefulness, confusion and apprehension. The hopefulness comes, as it does for all women, from the sense that if we could divorce ourselves from male-dominated partisan politics long enough to address the crucial issues of women's health, safety, education and economic opportunity we'd be steps closer to *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world that as Jews we believe is our task on earth. Confusion, because the United Nations, as of this writing, has not yet decided on the nature and functioning of the parallel conference for Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) similar to those held in Copenhagen in 1980 and Mexico City in 1975, at which representatives of Jewish women's organizations and independent Jewish women could appear and speak out. Apprehension, because both previous meetings saw unchecked expressions of anti-Semitism; in fact, their experiences at Copenhagen were for some of the Jewish women present their first encounter with the virulence of anti-Semitism and their first awareness of its presence in the worldwide women's movement (see LILITH #8). The logistical uncertainty with regard to observers and procedures heightens the anxiety that there will be no way to combat the expression of anti-Jewish or anti-Israel views.

It should be pointed out, however, that almost five years have elapsed since the disaster at Copenhagen. The various Jewish women's organizations might have utilized this time to evaluate what happened and why and to plan a direction and strategy for Nairobi. Instead, they have often fought among themselves and addressed themselves to superficial issues (such as learning how to grab a microphone) rather than substantive ones. No unified Jewish feminist strategy exists at present for combating the "anti-Zionism," with less than half a year to go until the Nairobi conference.

There is no question, of course, that combating anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in such a crucial public arena is an important aspect of what Jewish women should be doing at the conference, but, it should be realized, this ia a *reactive* role—a response to attacks by others—rather than an active one.

Moreover, with many of the Jewish women's organizations taking guidance, instructions and/or inspiration from the male-dominated Jewish establishment on what to combat and how, these women are playing precisely the same role of spokesperson for the Jewish establishment "party line" that the government-appointed women on most national delegations are primed to play for *their* male-dominated governments. In both cases the "women's agenda" should be the prime focus of their activities at the conference, which is—at least officially—dedicated to improving women's lot worldwide. This deflection of purpose is not only wrong in principle; it is also very poor strategy. For if their purpose is to keep the conference focused on the women's agenda (and prevent its being derailed onto an anti-Zionist track) the Jewish women's organizations themselves should be prepared to concentrate on this agenda, and for the most part they aren't.

This situation points up the acute lack of an organization representing and struggling for the goals thousands of Jewish feminists are committed to presently as individuals and as members of small local groups: from fighting anti-Semitism in the women's movement to promoting the women's agenda both within and outside of the Jewish community. The traditional instruments we've relied upon in the past are not working for our best interests right now.

Meanwhile, unaffiliated, independent American Jewish women who plan to attend the conference under feminist NGO auspices have devoted considerable energy to building coalitions with non-Jewish women trying to work on the issues that concern women rather than divide them. A petition along these lines has been prepared by novelist E.M. Broner and is being circulated by *Ms.* editor Letty Cottin Pogrebin. Please turn to page 44 for your copy; we encourage you to sign it, duplicate it, circulate and return it, and to do your part to keep women's issues on the agenda in your local Jewish and general communities.

NEW WRITING BY JEWISH WOMEN

A recent essay in the *New York Times Book Review* predicted—and applauded—the "death of the American Jewish novel." The thesis was that such fiction drew heavily on an immigrant background which is rapidly fading; when it no longer exists, neither will the genre.

This dire but at the same time gleeful prophecy calls to mind Mark Twain's rejoinder to his obit: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." For while the American Jewish novel of the kind written by Saul Bellow and Philip Roth may indeed be on the way out, this in no way means that the American Jewish novel is dead. Quite the opposite, in fact: fiction by Jewish *women* is burgeoning.

There was a time when we might have thought that novels of the kind written by Bellow and Roth accurately reflected the experience of men and women in Jewish America, despite our being disturbed by their portrayal of women in nasty stereotypical terms. We now understand that the world these men depicted—a world of male experience and male fantasy—was theirs alone. Rather than portraying Jewish women, it betrayed us.

The new writing by Jewish women showcased here is, we think, a good antidote to the images of Jewish women presented to us by these earlier writers. This special issue has had as its guest fiction editor Julia Wolf Mazow, editor of the collection of Jewish women's fiction and autobiography *The Woman Who Lost Her Names*. From the hundreds of stories—and poems—considered for this issue—some sent by authors unknown to us, some sent in response to our request—we have selected what we think are fine representations of what *Publishers Weekly* called a few years ago "the genre of Jewish women's liberation fiction."

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THE EDITORS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE ASSISTANCE OF:
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This issue of Lilith is a special double issue #12 and 13. Because of its size and scope it has taken longer to prepare than any previous issue of the magazine. We thank our subscribers for their patience, and hope you will agree that this issue is worth the wait.

Lines of Communication

Dear LILITH:
At the urging of the Attorney-General of Ontario (because he knows we get things done!) B'nai B'rith Women of Canada has undertaken a campaign to raise Canadian awareness re the growing tide of violent and horror-filled pornographic videocassettes that have been pouring across our border. Although 98% of these obscene materials are coming from the United States, the Canadian end of the industry is estimated as a $500 million greed trip for local porn distributors.

There are deficiencies in our Criminal Codes dealing with obscene films (they haven't been updated since the 50's) and we are sponsoring forums, seminars and panels throughout the country to educate the public about what is really out there in our video stores, available to anyone of age who has a credit card.

The censorship issue seems to be critical in the Jewish community, but we have discovered that censorship has become our sacred cow! Government determines what foods we may eat, what drugs may be legally purchased, what additives are dangerous in our meat and cosmetics, even what kind of air we may breathe. If the government can regulate these things, why do our politicians (male) believe that they cannot regulate the amount of torture, rape, violence, and degradation that are heaped upon women and children in this muck of pornography that seems to be proliferating along with the rapidity of changes in the technology?

Obviously, they *can* enact laws which can deal with the depiction, production, importation and distribution of violence, bestiality, and kiddie porn if we raise our voices till they are heard. No politician is going to stick his neck out if he believes the voters sanction, by their silence, films that make Playboy look like Bambi.

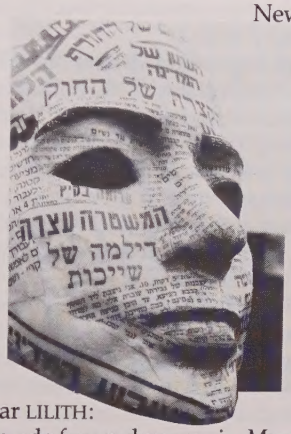
We believe the issues in the complex morass of pornography cross the borders that separate Jewish women's organizations by ideology, politics, philosophy, etc. These changes are important to us all, and only by working together can we create change.

Selma Z. Sage
Executive Director
B'nai B'rith Women of Canada
Downsview, Ont.

LILITH welcomes letters to the editor from readers, both to share views on articles printed and to share experiences and information. Letters must include name and address but either or both of these can be omitted.

Dear LILITH:
Re "Pornography in Israel" (#11): I hardly consider the use of nude or semi-nude women in advertising as pornography. To say that women are being exploited always struck me as odd. The models are surely paid for their efforts. Men buy the magazines and products. So who is being exploited?

Elliot Greene
New York NY



Dear LILITH:
The ads for underwear in *Monitin* which exhibited two women in conjunction with a furnace reminiscent of the Holocaust was particularly nauseating. The use of children in the other item was also an indication to what level certain elements in Israel have sunk. That things of this nature exist everywhere else (virtually) doesn't make me feel better. That it now exists in Israel is, for me, depressing.

Please send me information on some of the Israeli groups that sponsor women's shelters, etc., so that I can send a contribution. Thank you.

Stanley Brookoff
Brooklyn NY

US-Israel Women-to-Women is funding many Israeli groups that run shelters, rape crisis centers, etc. They can send you this information. Write them at 4 Sniffen Court, 156 E. 36 St., New York NY 10016.

Dear LILITH:
I was appalled at the rampant and explicit pornography I saw when I was in Israel. This should not be a problem, for apparently present Israeli laws ban *all* pornography. What is needed then, is not a change of law or an added law. Rather, an organization—or coalition of organizations (cutting across party and religious lines)—must invest the money, time and energy necessary to bring pornographers to court and see them prosecuted.

Y. David Shulman
Monsey NY

Dear LILITH:
I was moved to write by the article on intermarriage (#11). I have not ever received any indication that the Jewish community would allow me to be even part Jewish; as my father was the Jewish parent, I was informed that according to Mosaic tradition and law it only "counted" if the mother was a Jew.

At the time I thought it was due to an age-old fear of men that they could never be absolutely certain that their child was really "their" child, rather a pejorative view of women's virtue. As I grew older I realized that it could also have been due to the attitude that men's parenting was inconsequential, or, at least not important enough to raise a child in a religion or a tradition. At any rate the message was clear, YOU are not one of US.

My father refused to acknowledge that he was Jewish; he said being an atheist precluded being a Jew. We were kept away from my grandmother, a Polish Jew, except for obligatory holiday appearances. I was raised as a Catholic, and never had any affinity for the religion. I am areligious at this point in my life, age 32, and have been ever since I can remember.

I am intrigued by the statement of Inge Gibel that it is ". . . an important mitzvah—saving a Jewish child, because every Jewish child who is not raised a Jew is a loss to us, and in the age of the Holocaust we can't afford that loss." I suggest to her and to you at LILITH that there are many disenfranchised children of Jews who may perhaps stop peering against the glass if the door is opened a crack for them.

Susan Popoff-Baker
New York NY

Dear LILITH:
I have not met either Paula Hyman or Arlene Agus (interviewed in #11, "The Jewry is Still Out"), but I detect more than a feeling of hopelessness or pessimism as they review the last decade. I feel just the opposite, and hope my vantage point from the Pacific Northwest, while not exactly the seat of Jewish culture and activity, is not unique.

Jewish feminist sensibilities—on the part of both men and women— are definitely increasing. Twelve years ago, my daughter was only the second young woman (after the rabbi's daughter) to have a Bat Mitzvah in our synagogue, which is more than 100 years old. Now, there are probably as many girls as boys undertaking the study and ceremony, even though girls are not yet "required" to do so.

Aliyot, carrying the Torah, being counted

Lines of Communication

in the *minyan*, full participation, are an accepted and welcome part of the way our Conservative synagogue treats all its members. I was president of our congregation a few years ago, and particularly delighted at how our older members, particularly the women, took me aside and said, "it's about time."

Much of this enlightenment, if one can risk such a term, is due to our rabbi who has been with us 30 years, but seems to be becoming younger in spirit every day. He will brook no separation of the sexes, and by his example, leads the rest. A congregant asks: "Why are Sabbath candles only kindled by women? This seems sexist." The rabbi's answer: "You are absolutely right. Judaism. . .assigned roles to men and women even though the law does not fix these roles. A man can kindle the candles and a woman can chant the kiddush. . . .Don't worry that by modifying them that you are doing something wrong and sinful."

We in Portland struggle as do many Jewish communities, with issues of identity, alienation, loyalty and others which affect us deeply. While nationally, it was a disgrace that the (Conservative) Jewish Theological Seminary for too many years did not admit women as rabbinical students, it is a reason for joy that it finally does. On the West Coast, the University of Judaism educates scores of young men and women. In Portland, we have a woman cantor (at the Reform synagogue) who is welcomed even at the Orthodox/traditional shul, and a woman editor of our communal newspaper.

The important message, I believe, is that we have not failed—we just have "miles to go before we sleep," but miles further we will indeed go, with the majority of Jews—men and women—at our side.

Elaine Cogan
Portland OR

Dear LILITH:
Shame on you for printing the paragraph in E. Cohl's letter about lesbians (issue #11). Publishing dissenting/divergent views is a worthy exercise of free speech/freedom of the press. Publishing that hate-filled, homophobic paragraph serves only to push Jewish lesbians out of the Jewish community. At a time when we are struggling to maintain a sense of Jewish identity, LILITH's poor judgment hurt me to the quick. Surely you would never publish openly anti-Semitic material in your magazine. Please have the same respect for your lesbian sisters.
[name and address withheld on request]

Dear LILITH:
I just picked up my first copy of LILITH at Charis, the feminist bookstore in Atlanta. The design, graphics, and format are inviting, uncrowded and concisely written. I was also warmed to see the inclusion of the interview with Evelyn Beck (issue #10). It was through my acceptance of my sexuality as a lesbian that I began to examine the other hidden/denied parts of myself. Through this I discovered the feelings I had about being Jewish.

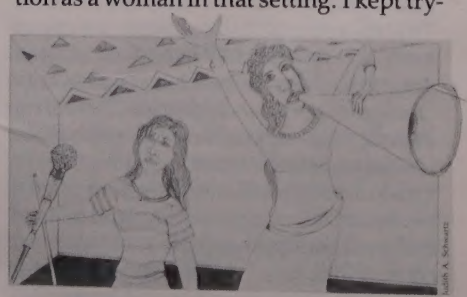
We have organized a Jewish lesbian group here in Durham. We are like a family. For the first time in my life I am helping plan and enjoying holiday celebrations. I feel proud to be a Jew and a lesbian.

I have begun speaking out about the subtle anti-Semitism of exclusion in the Christian Bible Belt. I was recently quite shocked at bringing this up with the "Christians" I work with in a progressive social change organization. I was told to separate myself from my Jewishness if I expected to be successful in my work. Well, rest assured I will not. Another "nice Jewish girl"—who is on the Board of this organization—and myself will be proposing a policy that requires no prayers before meetings or conferences or *non-denominational* prayers. I will not deny who I am.

Tobi Lippin
Durham NC

LILITH welcomes articles, fiction, poetry, biography, drama, children's stories, criticism, photos and original art work. Please include one-sentence biographical identification, address and phone number. Manuscripts must be typed, double spaced, on one side of the page. Complete guidelines are available on request; enclose SASE. For acknowledgement of receipt, please enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard. For return of manuscripts, enclose in SASE-LILITH Publications, Inc., 250 West 57 St., New York, NY 10019.

Dear LILITH:
Last Passover, our family went to the house of a rabbi friend of my father's to spend the holiday seder with his family. Along with the comfort of the familiarity of the rituals, I also experienced a deep sense of alienation as a woman in that setting. I kept trying to block out my feelings, but they overwhelmed me. My perception of it all was that the women cooked and the men led the service. Why the four sons—where are the daughters? Where am I in this story?



When I tried to express this to my family later I got all sorts of reactions. My mother looked at me as if I was making it all up, she did not see what I saw. My sister saw but said I shouldn't let it stop me from getting something out of Passover (or the whole Jewish tradition for that matter). But I couldn't listen to their consolations. My father just felt hurt that something so meaningful to him I was calling "sexist."

I remained confused and frustrated until. . .LILITH. Its articles spoke to my concerns directly and sensitively. The persistence and dedication of other Jewish women struggling to maintain the dignity of both identities without sacrificing one over the other—their voices have been a great inspiration. Especially moving was Blu Greenberg's excerpt from her book "Women and Judaism"—A View From Tradition" (Issue #9).

It is a priviledge to contribute to LILITH. Thank you.

Susan Bernstein
Somerville MA

Copies of issue #9, which includes LILITH's "Egalitarian Hagada," are available to our readers at $4. (including postage).

Dear LILITH:
I thank you for taking note of my receiving the "Center Professional of the Year" award of the Association of Jewish Center Workers (#11). To set the record straight, however, I serve as Director of the Judaic Studies and Israel Programs of *the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington*, not "New York's. . .Washington Heights" as stated in your Mazel Tov column. Please be assured that there is, indeed, life beyond the Hudson.

Elaine S. Mann
Rockville MD

Dear LILITH:
I would like to take out a subscription to LILITH as a birthday present for my mother. I am very proud of her. She just finished her term as president of Temple Sinai in Newington, CT. There were too many times when I had to explain to people, "No, not president of the *sisterhood*, president of the *congregation*."

Liz Reiner
West Hartford CT

Kol Ishah

Kol Ishah—"Woman's Voice." Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

WOMEN ENTER CONSERVATIVE RABBINICAL SCHOOL

A new era dawned for the Conservative movement—and the American Jewish community—this fall, as the first women Rabbinical School students entered classes at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Conservative movement's central academic institution.

The 18 women students, comprising approximately 50% of this year's incoming class, were admitted in keeping with the momentous 34-8 vote by the JTS Faculty Assembly on October 24, 1983 that accepted women to the Rabbinical School after some ten years of heated and often bitterly divisive debate within the movement.

The ruling came at a special session of the Assembly called by JTS Chancellor Gerson Cohen after the presentation of faculty papers, and after the issue had been tabled by a 25-19 vote of the JTS Faculty Senate on December 20, 1979. In May 1980, the Rabbinical Assembly, the international organization of Conservative Rabbis, had passed a resolution "favoring the ordination of women." [See LILITH #3, 6 and 7 for the background of this historic debate.]

Although 21 women had been expected to enter the Seminary this September, two chose to defer admission and one will begin her studies at Neve Schechter, the movement's branch in Israel, according to Rabbi Gordon Tucker, Dean of the JTS Rabbinical School. (The New York chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women plans to do an oral history of this class.—*Ed.*)

While the normal Rabbinical School program of study is six years, several of the incoming women students have taken courses there in the past for which they will now receive credit. Thus, women will begin entering the Conservative rabbinate in the next few years joining some 90 colleagues in the Reform and Reconstructionist movements. One student, Amy Eilberg, originally from Philadelphia and now of Providence RI, who received a master's degree in Talmud from the JTS in 1982, may have accumulated enough credits to be ordained next spring, according to the *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent.*

Women's admission to the Rabbinical Assembly will probably be the next step. Last May the RA rejected, for the second year in a row, the application of Rabbi Beverly Magidson, ordained by the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1979, and currently rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom, a Conservative synagogue in Clifton Park NY.

The vote was 230 in favor of Magidson's application to 99 opposed, or 17 votes short of the 75% required for admission; at last year's convention, she had fallen only four votes short (one percent). The repeat rejection, and the seeming decline in support for Magidson, were attributed primarily to the feeling of many RA members that, in view of last October's decision, the first woman admitted to the RA should be a JTS graduate.

Another factor cited was the geographic location of the 1984 convention, held in Kiamesha Lake NY as contrasted with Dallas last year. The East Coast is generally seen as more traditionalist than other parts of the country.

Magidson will probably have no difficulty being accepted into the RA once the first female Seminary graduate has become a member. In the past 40 years, the RA has admitted more than 400 (male) graduates of Reform and Orthodox rabbinical seminaries, according to Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, RA Executive Vice President.

Ten of the women entering JTS this fall have signed a letter urging the acceptance of Magidson and Jan Kaufman, another Reform rabbi from Washington DC, which was read during the RA debate in May.

The entry of women into positions of religious leadership in the Conservative movement—the largest and fastest growing group within American Jewry, with more than one million members at present—is expected to have wide-ranging implications.

Among the possibilities envisioned are the alienation of right-wing elements within the Conservative Movement—in both the U.S. and Israel; and halachic (Jewish legal) change that would allow for women's equal participation in Jewish ritual.

While the Seminary's decision to admit women to the Rabbinical School has not resulted in the large-scale defections by right-wing elements predicted by opponents of women's ordination, they remain a vocal lobbying group within the movement. The Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism (a successor to the Committee for the Preservation of Tradition within the RA, organized in the spring of 1979) held a "Founder's Conference" last May.

The Union's Panel of Halachic Inquiry recently issued a statement on "Women as Witnesses in Jewish Ritual Proceedings," which declared that "in usual Jewish ritual proceedings women may not function as witnesses, especially in matters pertaining to Jewish identity and internal Jewish status. Whoever relies on such invalid testimony will cause irreparable damage to the unity of the house of Israel and to individual Jewish families. Furthermore, whoever accepts such testimony is himself disqualified to be a witness on the grounds that he has aided and abetted a grave infraction of the law."

Most observers agree that the admission of women to the Rabbinical School will impel the Conservative leadership to resolve such halachic issues as *shaliach tzibur, edut* and *dayanut* (Jewish legal prohibitions against women serving as leaders of public worship, witnesses in ritual matters, and judges in religious courts).

The RA's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards did issue a 1974 minority opinion favoring women's serving as witnesses. Although the 1979 report of the Commission on the Ordination of Women, established by JTS Chancellor Gerson Cohen, declared these to be "ancillary functions" of the modern rabbinate, many believe that the issues must be confronted before the first women enter the field.

The Seminary has taken a major step in this direction with the formulation of new religious requirements for admission to the Rabbinical School by a special committee appointed by Chancellor Cohen immediately after the October vote and included in this year's JTS *Academic Bulletin.* In addition to requiring candidates for admission to demonstrate commitment to Jewish law and observe rituals such as the Sabbath and festivals, regular daily prayer and the dietary laws, the new insert states that "Women are expected to accept equality of obligation in the performance of *mitzvot*" (commandments).

This statement has potentially radical implicaitons, in that women's traditional "exemption" from the performance of positive time-bound *mitzvot* is regarded as the basis for much of their ritual exclusion. Moreover, beginning this fall, the Seminary will conduct two daily services—one with separate seating and no ritual participation by women, and the other based on women's equal participation.

Observers additionally predict that

Kol Ishah

women's entry into the Conservative rabbinate may promote the clarification of the movement's goals and identity; active participation of women in shaping the tradition through the interpretation of text, changes in liturgy to reflect women's experience and sensibilities; emergence of new styles of religious leadership; re-ordering of communal priorities; and expansion of American Jewry's pool of talented leadership.

The women entering JTS this fall are, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency: Toba August, Brooklyn; Deborah Blank, Peru IN; Susan Grossman Boder, The Bronx; Carolyn Braun, San Mateo CA; Deborah Cantor, Hartford; Amy Eilberg, Providence RI; Lori Forman, Berkeley CA; Jodie Feutornickl, West Orange NJ; Pamela Hoffman, Highland Park NY; Elana Kantor, Rochester NY; Naomi Levy, Brooklyn; Shelly Meltzer, Madison WI; Rhoda Nabel, Stoughton MA; Deborah Orenstein, South Orange NJ; Nina Cardin Reisner, Teaneck NJ; Michal Shekel, Oberlin OH; Marion Shulevich, Hialeah FL; and Jonina Skioff, St. Louis MO. The student who will attend Neve Schechter is Melody Johnson of North Hollywood, CA. *R.S.F.*

FONDA VISITS NUDEL

Ida Nudel, the Jewish refusnik who has been denied an exit visa to emigrate to Israel since 1972, celebrated her 53rd birthday in April in her exile city of Bendery, with actress Jane Fonda by her side.

"We were the first Westerners to have visited her in six years," Fonda said in a press conference in New York after her return from a five-day trip to the Soviet Union. The actress, who has taken a personal interest in Nudel's case since 1980 after she met with Nudel's sister, Elena Fridman, in Jerusalem, said that she spent three days with Nudel, who lives alone in a simple, "very small" house with her dog.

Fonda said she went to the Soviet Union to meet with Nudel and discuss her case with Soviet officials. In Moscow, she met with V.V. Kuznetsov, head of Ovir, the Soviet emigration agency, and asked that Nudel be allowed to emigrate to Israel to be reunited with her sister. The Soviet offical said that Nudel's case in an "internal affair" and that it is not different from many other cases, Fonda reported.

"Ida Nudel is a woman whose case has deeply touched my heart, a woman of great courage and determination," Fonda stated. "She has risked much to stand up to the Soviet authorities, to practice her faith and to celebrate her Jewish heritage. She continues to be a source of spiritual support for many other refuseniks and Prisoners of Conscience."

Fonda said that her visit gave Nudel "strength and the proof that she is not forgotten." According to Fonda, Nudel told her that the visit made her "safe" and probably would prevent further Soviet harrassment.

Fonda vowed to continue her activity on behalf of Soviet Jewry in general and Nudel in particular. She declared:

"Those of us who speak and work for peace and for a climate of better relations between the two superpowers cannot turn a blind eye to the abuse of human rights in the Soviet Union, abuses which are unworthy of a powerful nation. I plead, in the name of peace, for a relaxing of restrictions on Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate, and for a humanitarian gesture towards Ida Nudel." *(JTA May 2, 1984).*

OTTAWA JEWISH WOMEN'S NETWORK

The Ottawa Jewish Women's Network which grew out of a conference on Women and Judaism held in November 1983. The conference was the first of its kind held in Ottawa and aroused such enthusiasm that it was obvious some on-going dialogue was needed.

The JWN is unique in Ottawa in many ways: it has a coordinator but no membership as such; any Jewish woman is, or can be, a part of the network, to whatever extent she chooses. It has no defined program; programs evolve as women express an interest in various issues.

For example, some women have formed a discussion group which grew out of their desire to explore feelings of marginality among Jewish women. It meets monthly to discuss topics as diverse as lesbianism, mixed marriage and wife battering among Jews.

Other women want to set up a B'rit B'not Havurah to create their own rituals for welcoming daughters into the Covenant. A first ever course in women and Judaism is being offered at the Reform religious school, and will be offered to adults beginning in January. A Jewish feminist group, and a feminist Seder are in the planning stages.

Most significantly, the JWN has brought into Jewish activity many women who felt uncomfortable with traditional Jewish groups for a variety of reasons. Many are completely non-religious; some are gay; others are unmarried and childless, either by choice or because they cannot find a suitable partner. We have housewives and career women, students and grandmothers, traditional and radical women in our Network.

The Ottawa JWN welcomes an exchange of ideas and information with any similar groups. And we welcome any woman who finds herself in Ottawa and would like to make contact with an open, searching, caring community of Jewish women.

Jewish Women's Network, JCC—
15 Chapel St., Ottawa K1N7Y2.
Alma Norman, Co-ordinator

"DIALOGUE" SPARKS ACTION

As an outgrowth of the 1984 American Jewish Congress America-Israel Dialogue, "Woman as Jew, Jew as Woman: An Urgent Inquiry," the AJCongress has formed a National Commission on Women's Equality.

This commission will concentrate on the specific areas of women and work; women and politics; women and religion; and women and the family. An initial Statement of Purpose reads: "Our goal is full equality for women and the sensitization of Jewish women and men to equality of women as a key to Jewish survival." It will also act as a support group and network for a newly formed Israel Women's Lobby, a women's rights group that has emerged from the Dialogue.

Lisa Blum, chief editor of the Jewish Student Press Services Israel Bureau, reports:

As Yizhak Shamir and Shimon Peres opened a second round of unity talks at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, July 31 Haifa City Councilwoman Yael Rom (Likud) and Jerusalem City Councilwoman and former Knesset member Tamar Eshel (Labor) arrived on the scene to express their concern about the status of Israeli women. They were accompanied by former U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman, author Betty Friedan, *LILITH* editor Susan Weidman Schneider, and other American and Israeli Dialogue participants.

The three-day Dialogue dealt with such varied topics as religious practice, politics, family, work, and the 1985 U.N. Conference on Women in Nairobi. The 30 participants and 50 official observers were joined by twice that number of listeners after pressure from them and the participants forced the sponsors to open the Dialogue sessions.

The sponsors expressed surprise at the "unprecedented" interest in the conference. "The role of the American Jewish Congress was simply to bring women together in the hope, but not really the expectation, that something would come of

PLEASE POST. . . PLEASE POST. . . PLEASE POST. . . PLEASE POST. . . PLEASE POST. . . PLEASE POST. . . PLEASE POST. . .

MISSING CHILD

Ann Gotlieb, a child adbucted from a Louisville KY mall on June 1, 1983 at the age of 12, is still missing, despite a massive police, FBI, and community search.

This is her description, as of June, 1983:
AGE: Born May 5, 1971
HEIGHT AND WEIGHT: 4'11", 85 pounds
HAIR: curly red/auburn, shoulder length
EYES: gray; white eyelashes and eyebrows
COMPLEXION: white, fair, freckled
BUILD: small
OTHER: pierced ears.

Ann was last seen on June 1, 1983 between 5:30 and 6 PM in the Bashford Manor Mall playing with a kitten at a pet shop. She disappeared after splitting up with a young friend in the Mall's parking lot. She was wearing navy blue shorts with white stripes, a red and white T-shirt, beige tennis shoes , and gold-colored earrings.

Police are still searching for an unidentified man suspected of abducting her. He was described as white, in his 40's. about 5'10" tall, with a husky build, hairy tanned arms, and "heavy in the face." He was reportedly wearing white painter's pants with grease or paint on them, a white T-shirt and a light tan hat.

Ann is the daughter of Soviet Jewish immigrants who came to the U.S. in 1980. Her father, Anatoly, was a mining engineer in Kiev (the Ukraine). He has been unemployed since Bechtel Petroleum Inc., for whom he had worked, closed its Louisville office. Ann's mother, Lyudmilla, worked as an assistant teacher of science and math at The (Louisville) Temple's Early Childhood Education Center.

Ann was a student at the Louisville Jewish Day School. She had just completed sixth grade (having skipped fifth grade), was known as a quiet, bright girl who represented her school in last year's spelling bee. She is fluent in both English and Russian.

The Gotliebs are among the 250 Soviet immigrant families who have settled in Louisville's East End. Ruth Rosenblum, a resettlement coordinator for the Jewish Family and Vocation Service, said that "in their wildest dreams never could they have imagined that something so tragic would happen."

Prof. Kerry Rice of the University of Louisville's Kent School of Social Work and a volunteer with the county Exploited and Missing Child Unit, said the Gotliebs' loss was "a double compound tragedy" because they were immigrants:

"Here are people who saw this country as a great country, who wanted to have a wonderful place for their daughter to live, who selected this country, and then [a] hellish thing like this happened."

The people of Louisville and its Jewish and Soviet immigrant communities have rallied around the Gotliebs. They helped them place 20,000 reward posters all over the city. Members of the Temple Sisterhood and the police force distributed thousands of buttons with color photos of Ann. An outdoor advertising firm put up 12 billboards. Over 300,000 international posters in five languages have been distributed in 40 countries via two major airlines. Dozens of volunteer workers—dubbed "Lyudmilla's Army"—have continued to search for the child. In the summer of 1983, a $15,000 reward "for the proven whereabouts" of Ann was quickly raised through the Louisville Jewish Federation. Anyone with information should call any of these numbers:

TOLL FREE 1-800-342-0821
LOUISVILLE FBI (502) 583-3941
JEFFERSON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT (502) 588-2111
(Detectives Joe Aneken and/or Walter Tangle)
THE FAMILY: (502) 454-3004
Or write:
POB 1467, Louisville KY 40201

Contributions to the Ann Gotlieb Search Fund can be sent to the Fund at 5101 Brownsboro Road, Louisville KY 40222.

it," remarked Ted Mann, president of the AJCongress and one of the few men in attendance.

Conference speaker Dr. Dafna Izraeli reported that the issue of women ranks low among Israeli concerns. In one study quoted by the Tel Aviv-based sociologist, university students asked to list 17 social issues in order of priority and placed women at the very bottom. "Women in this country suffer from the Golda Meir effect—that any women who is able can make it," said Izraeli. "But it has been pointed out to me that if you're going to be a Golda Meir you'll have to divorce your husband and abandon your children."

While American sociologist Cynthia Fuchs Epstein pointed to the exclusion of American women from "many clubs at which business is conducted and political decisions are made," Izraeli blasted the myth of women's equality in the army. She compared the importance of the male military elite in Israel to that of corporate managers in the United States. (Col. Amira Dotan, head of the women's corps of the Israeli Army and a participant in the Dialogue, said that she could not comment on this to reporters without Army clearance.)

Shulamit Aloni, the only female head of an Israeli political party—the Citizen's Rights and Peace Movement—explained that "during pioneering times women shared equal responsibilities (with men). But they didn't really get equal rights or status." With the establishment of the State, the problem became more complex. "For example, a few years after 1948 Golda wanted to run for mayor of Tel Aviv. The religious parties decided they wouldn't be in a coalition with a woman. So Golda didn't become mayor," Aloni said.

In recent years, when she brought the issue of battered women to the Knesset "the men giggled." They also laughed at the issue of rape, "until three women over 70 were raped in their bedrooms that same year," Aloni said.

While most of the participants debated strategies and tactics for direct action to raise consciousness and improve the status of Jewish women in both countries, author Cynthia Ozick took on what she called the "philosopher" role (See "Bima," p. 51). Betty Friedan noted, "Feminism is the one 'ism' in the United States which brought Jewish women back to Judaism." Former U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman, Brooklyn's D.A., encouraged Israeli women to fight for equality. "Going against women will only be tolerated to a breaking point. If regressive steps are taken in Israel, it may raise Israeli women's consciousness."

B'NAI B'RITH WOMEN FIGHT DISSOLUTION

B'nai B'rith Women president, Beverly Davis, expressed her firm opposition to a resolution passed by B'nai B'rith International September 4 calling for a plan to open the BBI membership to women. The struggle highlights issues involved in the ongoing debate over the future of separate Jewish women's organizations.

Davis declared that "we will take all steps necessary to preserve our independence and our membership. . . . BBW as an independent Jewish women's organization, with its own programs and priorities, has served, and will continue to serve, as a respected and important voice for Jewish women." BBW leaders in 33 cities have signed statements declaring that "Bnai Brith Women should remain an independent and autonomous Jewish women's organization, in control of its own programs, policies and assets."

Davis reported that BBW's 37 delegates came to the BBI convention at which the resolution was adopted with a mandate given them by BBW leadership in 33 cities across the country, urging a firm stand in opposition to the resolution. She added that "we have fulfilled our mandate by making our opposition clear." According to Davis, the resolution read:

"Commencing January 1, 1987, full and equal membership in B'nai B'rith shall be made available for women in accordance with a plan that shall be presented for approval at the next international convention of B'nai B'rith in 1986."

The resolution had originated among delegates to the 1982 B'nai B'rith convention, who decided to commission a study on the issue. Members of a committee of 12 men and two women then evaluated the report—entitled *Women in Organizations: An Analysis of the Role and Status of Women in American Voluntary Organizations*—written by Dr. David Sommers, an outside consultant, surveying 30 Jewish and non-Jewish voluntary organizations.

Davis has charged that the move was prompted by B'nai B'rith's need for a "broader base of membership and more funds"; that it would threaten the independence of BBW; and that it would place B'nai B'rith and the BBW "in direct competition."

BBW, established in 1955 claims a membership of 120,000 in 750 chapters in the US and Canada. Davis said there is "a new tide of feeling in this country—a forceful determination by women to represent themselves. Being integrated into an organization is not the ultimate signpost of equality."

JEWISH COMMUNITY URGED TO DEAL WITH WIFE ABUSE

A well-known rabbi recently announced from the pulpit that all were welcome in his congregation—"except wife beaters." A survey among New York rabbis found that while nearly all denied first-hand knowledge of Jewish domestic violence, and some even claimed it never happens, many agreed that shelters for its victims should be established.

One such shelter has already housed nearly 400 women, many of them Jewish, and receives 150 to 200 calls for help a month. Two recent studies in Los Angeles identified several cases of spousal abuse among Jews, and two major conferences on the subject have been held in as many years in the New York area alone.

The latest of the two conferences was this fall. It was cosponsored by the American Jewish Committee's New York chapter, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods District 3, the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, and the women's branch of the Orthodox Union, and it was attended by sisterhood leaders from the three branches of Judaism.

The objectives of the conference were to determine the severity of the problems among American Jews and to form a "national network for change."

All the indications at the conference were that one of the most persistent myths —that Jewish men don't beat their wives— is being exploded. Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but social service agencies under both Jewish and nonsectarian auspices are increasingly reporting that Jews are following the lead of the general society.

That lead is clear: approximately 10 to 15,000,000 cases of wife abuse are recorded annually in the United States. Many more cases go unreported. Domestic violence figures as a cause in about 60 percent of divorce cases, and the Victim Services Agency in New York City estimates that almost half of all women will experience violence from a spouse or partner at some point in their lives.

All the speakers at the joint conference agreed that wife abuse has always existed—among Jews as well as non-Jews. It is not the problem but the recognition that is growing. Jewish battering may be more "insidious" than other pathologic behaviors among Jews, "because it has been so

(cont. on p. 44)

Of chilblains and rotten rutabagas:

Of chilblains and rotten rutabagas:

MARGE PIERCY

apter from a new novel set mainly during World War II. chapter consists of excerpts from the diary of Jacqueline -Monot, a young woman of 19 in her last year of lycée h school), living in Paris with her mother and sister ee/Rifka. Her other sister, Nadine/Naomi, was trans- ed, by a series of lucky chances, to the U.S., where she ving with relatives. Her father is across the line in Vichy ce, active in the burgeoning Jewish resistance. Jac- ine undergoes a marked development in the novel in her growth as a person and in her sense of herself as a an and a Jew.

August 22, 1941

will be a brief entry, as I have had no sleep for the last two ts. We all went into the country near Bievres with Papa's opain Georges to buy up what food we could at two farms re Georges has formed a relationship. It was hot and Ma- was off work, so we decided to make almost a vacation of he train was extremely crowded with others doing exactly ame thing, everybody carrying a minimum of clothes and aximum of bags and knapsacks empty which we all ned to try to buy food to fill.

hese days nobody but the Germans and those who cater em and flatter them and serve them, are the least bit ele- . In winter we all wander around in as many layers of ters and shawl and cardigans and socks as we can cram on, use we lack fuel. All times of the year we go about Paris ing empty bags or full ones, prepared for hours in line for ndful of old beans or a jar of jam. Nobody drives anybody ot the Germans. Bicycles are the life line and if your tire you must mend it to survive. So we stood in the mobbed eyeing each other and wondering what edibles each of us off to scavenge and what we were trading for them. We had ple pieces of soap and a piece of somewhat ratty but still warm beaver that any clever housewife could make into ff or use to trim a coat, a little of the worthless money that ermans devalued and a pair of good wool pants of Papa's, which we feel bad about trading but we are afraid the moths will eat them eventually.

When we came back, we came back to utter confusion. While we were gone, the Nazis closed off the entire eleventh arrondissement and shut down the metro stations and moved in. They arrested Jews on the streets, in cafes and restaurants, waiting in line—which is all we do from one day to the next—and even in their homes. The Balabans are gone without a trace.

For two days I have been running around Paris for Maman, who has been crying and crying, trying to find out what happened to them. Finally today I learned they are in some sort of camp at Drancy, out near the Le Bourget airport. Maman is greatly relieved to find out where they are. Soon we must find out how we can see them and what they need. Their apartment is a shambles, everything thrown on the floor and ripped open. The people in the building say the police who took them away did it. If they were looking for the legendary riches those sort always seem to think Jews have, they were looking in vain, because the Balabans owned hardly more than the clothes on their backs and some rickety second-hand furniture.

August 25, 1941

Things get uglier. Just a little over a week ago there was fighting between demonstrators and police—both the gendarmes and the German police—at porte Saint-Denis and porte Saint-Martin, and they busted a lot of people even though it was not different from a hundred other demonstrations everybody who has lived in Paris through the last ten years has seen and comes to take for granted! Anyhow,the Germans went ahead and executed two of the people they had arrested and one of them they are making a great fuss about because he is Jewish

MARGE PIERCY is an author whose most recent novel, Fly Away Home, *was published by Summit in 1984. Her next book of poems,* My Mother's Body, *will come out from Knopf in March, 1985.* © Marge Piercy 1984. All rights reserved.

and they list him in big letters on all the posters as The Jew Samuel Tyzelman.

Henri says it is just the Nazi madness and people will begin to laugh at them and mass disobedience will result, but I find his attitude too optimistic for me these days. He brought me a beautiful present today—five kilos of potatoes and a litle piece of mutton. Maman was in ecstasy although of course her second question was, Are you sleeping with him? If I were, Maman, perhaps he would have given me a bigger piece of mutton! I said. She made as if to slap me, but then she did not, because in truth she was too happy about the mutton and the potatoes too.

Henri has relatives who have a farm 35 kilometers north and he bicycled out there on Saturday and back on Sunday loaded down with parcels. We had such a feast tonight and Maman is going to stretch it over the next two nights. It is so long since we have had anything except cattle fodder and herbal extractions and a few rotten vegetables cooked for soup, beans beans beans beans and an occasional thin slice of cheese washed down with ersatz coffee and tzisanes. Every so often one egg apiece.

Last month we had used up our bread allowance by the twelfth and even trying so hard this month, we ran out by the seventeenth. We would run out sooner but we all scrounge whatever we can, and my copains, the gang at the Cafe Le Jazz Hot, treat me almost every day. Most of them have decent black market connections. Of course it is much easier if you aren't a Jew, but I can't complain, because they share with me.

I am writing this tonight on a full belly, and it is amazing how strong and alert I feel. Right after we ate I almost dozed off. We sat around the salle a manger, Maman, Renee and I, and beamed at each other. We felt peaceful as cows in a field, and yet I could not be entirely ashamed that my bliss was built on having for once a well filled stomach, because I have learned how difficult it is to concentrate on an empty one.

It is also cheering to know we shall not be hungry tomorrow or the next day. I feel I can face the problems of our lives less on my nerves and more with a solider strength. I did not know if I enjoyed the lamb more or the potatoes. Even the rutabagas we loathe so much and eat every day tasted almost like food in the stew. Last week Celeste sold me a bag of carrots that must have weighed at least two kilos. Maman still had two of them left for our grand stew.

Most of our lives are spent standing in lines. We divide up the labor. Maman still has her job at the furriers, even though the firm has been taken away from M. Cariot. They are seizing all the Jewish businesses. But the man who has taken it over did not fire the Jews, as expected, because he says how is he supposed to run a skilled business with no skilled workers? Maman says we are very lucky. Renee and I try to do most of the standing in line. We take turns, but I do it better because I am bigger, while Renee gets pushed out of the way.

Anyhow the Germans have announced that everybody arrested no matter for what—and at least over half the people arrested are merely people who get caught out after curfew—are going to be treated as hostages. You get involved and miss the last metro, and then you are out of luck if a friend is not kind enough to let you stay over, as Celeste has let me stay several times, and Henri and Jules like gentlemen once, although of course I did not tell Maman where I was and she was absolutely furious. She hits the ceiling when I stay out. I don't do it intentionally, but occasionally everybody misses that last metro. Anyhow that means that if you get caught at anything at all, some minor infraction, then they may take you out and shoot you some morning because some hothead has taken a potshot at a German officer. I do not understand what the Germans expect to accomplish by this brutality. Do they think when some poor dishwasher in a restaurant who misses her train is shot for an action one of the new resistance groups takes, that the Gaullist groups or the Communists are going to fold up and wither away?

I almost forgot, somebody else has moved into the Balabans already. They have thrown the Balabans' pitiful things out into the street for the neighbors to pick through, but held on to their kitchen table and chairs. When the Balabans come back, I don't know what they will do. I only hope Maman is not carried away by fellow feeling into taking them in. Without Papa's income we have let go of my room on the top floor. Renee and Maman share her double bed and I sleep on the folding bed in the salle a manger.

September 8, 1941

I was coming from the Opera where I had been reading all the posters when I had to pass along the Boulevard des Italiens and I simply wasn't thinking about anything in particular beyond the character of Berenice in Racine's great tragedy, with whom in some ways I can easily identify myself, and about which I am trying to write an essay, when I saw a great crowd of people ahead. They were lined up to enter the Palais Berlitz.

"Oh, what's that? Is there an exhibition?" I asked a middle-aged woman. I am always careful to ask information on the street from women, since I would not want to give an opening to some man who might imagine I am trying to pick him up, as Marie Charlotte used to warn. I still remember that idiot boy who followed us all the way to Marie Charlotte's flat just because we answered his question and told him which way the Gare du Nord was. Now I understand he perfectly well knew, but he was simply trying to start conversation with us. Henri says I am definitely naive about men, but the truth is I have other worries and do not need more.

"It's a big exhibition, everyone's going," she said, nodding at me. "It's The Jew and France. You ought to go too. You aren't too young to face facts."

I thought at first she meant that as a Jew I should understand anti-Semitism, but then she went on, "You have to keep yourself pure, a young girl such as yourself, but you must understand contamination too. It's a matter of educating one's self for the New France."

I am ashamed that I was so embarrassed for her, to be so stupid and rude, that I could not say one word. I'm afraid my manners simply automatically caused me to thank her and hasten away. She was a well-dressed lady of middle age, wearing a navy suit with the new shoulder pads they are showing and a crisp white blouse with a bow tie, an oversized hat with an entire little dead bird on it.

I wish I had struck her, but that would be absurd, and actually an evil reaction to return verbal violence with physical violence. Perhaps I did the best thing. But then I took no stand. What should I have done? If I were truly a noble soul such as Berenice in Racine's play, the words would have come to me and I would have said something clear and ringing that would have touched her and shown her how foolish she was to speak that way of an entire people.

As it was I felt utterly discombobulated and simply proceeded along the broad sidewalk toward the crowd ahead.

Right on the front of the Palais Berlitz between the pillars was this enormous four-story-high poster of an old man with a beard and long nose supposed to be a Jew and digging claws into a globe, where France was drawn in. It was ghastly. I became very hot and I did not know where to look. I was afraid I would burst into tears right on the street. As I saw all these ordinary people, my countrymen whom yesterday I might have stood beside in the Metro or sat beside in the cinema or said hello to at the newsvender's kiosk all waiting to cram into this Nazi display put on by a French organization L'Institut d'Etude des Questions Juives, I felt like a cockroach they were trying to crush under their well-shod feet.

On one hand I wanted to climb a soap box and shriek at them, how dare you imagine that the ugly picture you've drawn has anything in common with me? It's your own disgusting imagination you revel in, resembling those filthy drawings the boys used to make and then try to make us look at them. Tell us what that is, tell us what that is. Your own ugly mind, I told Paul: one time I did think up the right thing to say.

I think one of my worst flaws is that while my mind seems to work more quickly than other people's, often I see too many sides to a question, causing me to be weaker in my response than would be a case if I saw things more simply. I should strive to be simpler. Sometimes I think simplicity is virtue, and when I say that, or rather write it, I think of Maman, who always seems to go straight to the heart of the matter.

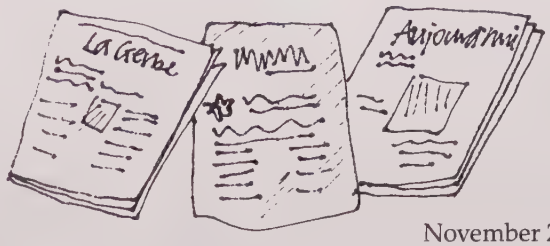
When I came home, I thought whether I should say anything about what I had seen, and then I looked at Maman, so careworn and exhausted from working all day at the furriers and then rushing about trying to find something to make into soup for supper, and poor little Renee, who is so subdued and quiet these days I worry about her. And I thought, when Papa comes home at last, I'll talk to him about it, but in the meantime, as he said to me, I must take care of Maman and Renee, because in some ways I really am cooler headed.

October 3, 1941

Last night six of the synagogues of Paris were blown up! I cannot believe it. But it is true. I went with Renee this morning and we looked at our own where we go on High Holidays. Nothing remains but a shell with glass and mortar and pieces of cloth and blowing papers. All around Jews of the neighborhood were milling and picking through the rubble trying to save something. It made me so indignant I burn with helplessness. What a vile idiotic act. Blowing up a building of worship. What kind of fools think this is a proper political act?

All the newspapers are screaming that this was a spontaneous act of the French people who want us, the so-called foreign element, thrust out. Who are rejecting us as they reject a disease or a poison. I must say, it is great to have become a microbe. I walk around Paris these days and it is just as if some lout is striking me in the face every twenty paces, when I see one of those newspapers going on about how great the recent round-up is, and how France is being cleansed and purified, or when I see some truly crude and disgusting caricature supposed to represent me or Papa or Maman, or when I try to find out what is happening in the world, and in place of the newspapers that for all their partisanship at least carried the world's news, we have nothing but these rags that shriek hatred and call for death for all of us.

Sometimes I cannot believe it still, that all these Frenchmen run about sucking up to the Germans and flattering them and parroting their ideas. I have silly fantasies of rushing into the offices of one or another of these rags or the magazines that pretend to literary or philosophical merit. *Les Nouveaux Temp, La Gerbe, Aujourd'hui, Nouvelle Revue Francaise,* they all hew to the occupiers' line and none of them defends us. They are only politer forms of *L'Appel* and *Au Pilori* which shriek their diarrhea of abuse at us daily and call openly for our death. I feel as if I live in a rabid city, where every other man froths and foams in violent insanity.



November 29, 1941

What a sad subdued birthday the 24th was. We had a recent message from Papa. Some callow youth in boy scout uniform appeared with it. A most unlikely carrier of clandestine messages, I would think, but he made a point of telling me he is in the E.I.F., which stands for the Eclaireures Israelites de France, the Jewish boy scouts. He shrugged off our thanks and said he goes back and forth across the border freely, saying it is not difficult for him, because he has his ways.

He also brought a bottle of cassis to us as a present from Papa, which is certainly welcome because Maman and I particularly miss the warmth of a little wine with supper, and it has been months since we have tasted anything alcoholic at all. We trade our tiny wine ration to Mme. Kahn for a little butter and some skim milk for Rifka. Cassis, Maman says, is particularly welcome because our stomachs are so often upset from eating rotten food or bread that has strange additives in it—we suspect everything from ground up bones to plaster dust from demolition. Cassis we will measure out a tablespoon at a time after supper to warm us a little and soothe our poor suffering stomachs.

Papa is in Toulon, the boy told us. He seems to admire Papa very much. He said Papa cannot get back. He almost got caught once and had to leave Menton where he was operating for a while. He said Papa is a very brave man and we should be proud of him and he was working on securing papers for us, which he himself hopes to deliver on his next trip, but that what Papa needed now were some recent photographs for counterfeit identity papers.

At that point the three of us went into the bedroom, shut the door and examined Papa's note carefully to make sure it was really from him, and this was not some Fascist youth in disguise, trying to entrap us. But the handwriting was obviously Papa's. The note was short and said only that he loved us, missed us powerfully and that we should give the young man what he needed, because he would carry it back to Papa on his next rounds, as Papa put it.

The trouble was that we had not had pictures taken of ourselves for several years, and we hardly dare pry the photos off our present identification, much as we hate it, for the sake of providing relatively recent photographs. We told the young man we could try to get pictures taken the coming week. We scarcely have any money. He said we should see what we could do, and he would look into it too, but that he couldn't wait, as he had something to do farther north. He would drop in on us on the way south, he said, and if we had the photos he would

carry them away with him, and if we didn't, if he could, he would arrange for them to be taken right away.

Needless to say I do not intend to say a word to anyone outside the family, and I cautioned Maman, who is always sensible, and Rifka, who is not, to keep their mouths tightly shut on this visit.

Then a present arrived from Naomi in Detroit in the United States. I wa astonished that the little mischief-maker had remembered my birthday, but then I imagined that probably one of the adults had arranged for the package for her. It had been mailed two months ago, but everything in it was intact and we were delighted. She sent us a big kosher sausage, so I guess they make them in the United States too, a kilo of sugar, a jar of strawberry, a jar of apricot and a jar of raspberry jam. Anything sweet is a big hit with us. She also put in two bars of Camay soap and a jar of liver pate.

Naomi writes regularly, but her French grammar is dreadful and growing worse. She is becoming a barbarian. I do not know if Papa did the right thing sending her off that way, by herself, although of course we get letters from Rose Siegal in Yiddish, a language I cannot read, although Maman translates for us. She assures us that Naomi is well and improving her English (while deproving her own language, I comment) and growing rapidly. So is Rifka, but she is too thin. If only we could get a little more food for her. At school they give the children vitamin cookies. Some of the children trade theirs, but I have ordered Rifka to eat hers every day. Every time a letter comes from Naomi or from Aunt Rose, Maman cries all night and Rifka gets even more melancholy. She used to be a lively child—a devil. Now she seems half lost.

It was thoughtful of Naomi or Rose Siegal or both to send us these gifts. Winter is setting in early and we are freezing already. We have no heat and Maman is developing chilblains. We go to bed with a hot water bottle, but it stays warm only for an hour. We go about the house wrapped up like packs of old clothes and wearing gloves except when we must take them off to wash a dish.

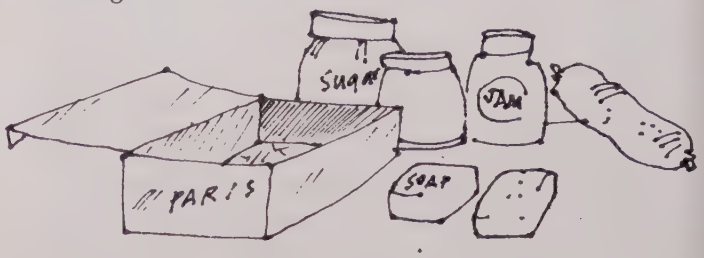
The soap is a particular treat, because we will institute a regular system of bathing again, at least once a week. We have had no soap since October as we have been trading it for food. Rifka must eat and so must Maman. I fare the best because I am petted by my friends who are half of them at least into the black market and they are always giving me tidbits and even meals. I try to slip a roll or a bite of chicken into my pocket for Rifka and Maman whenever I can, because once Celeste caught me stuffing a half a Croque-Monsieur into my pocket and said, well if you aren't hungry, I'll eat it, and did.

Yes, I eat ham outside the house. I would eat a toad if someone served it to me. I would have given it to Rifka and simply told her it was corned beef. I felt miserable because I was hungry and I wanted dreadfully to eat it, but I had wanted even more to give a little to Rifka, who is so skinny and almost blue. Maman thinks she might be anemic, but what can we do about it? Henri has not been treating me to lunch this week. He has decided I have a virginity fetish, he says, and I must overcome such bourgeoise hangups.

Fine, I said, I'll go out on the Boulevard and stop the first pedicab and offer myself.

A stranger might have a disease, he said. I'm only thinking of you.

I know how you are thinking of me, and dream on, I said. Dream on. I act very cool as is the way to act with all of them, but it makes me feel very strange to sit at the table with him and have him constantly as if casually touching my knee, my elbow, my shoulder. If we did not wear so many layers of clothing, he would be able to see that sometimes I get goosebumps. But luckily for me, we are both wound up in our clothes like mummies in a museum and even when he tried to kiss me, he got no nearer than six inches because of all our padding. Still I dream of his light brown eyes like wet sand fixed on me, wanting.



December 12, 1941

So now Germany is at war with the United States too. Henri says they will have finally bitten off more than they can easily digest, but they seem to have digested us easily enough. I have little concrete hope except that by the time I am an old lady, I may live in a saner world. But no more packages from Naomi and no more letters either. We are cut off from our sister as if she were on the moon!

Yesterday something simply unimaginable occurred. The Nazis rounded up one thousand French Jews, including all the lawyers who practice at the Paris bar, yes every one of them. They took doctors, lawyers, writers and intellectuals and simply arrested them. Nobody seems to know where they have been taken, except that this time, it is not Drancy, where the poor Balabans are still imprisoned. We have brought them little parcels. We rescued some of their clothing from the street. The place stinks from a block away. It is an unfinished housing project now surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers. You would imagine the poor Balabans to be some sort of dangerous murderers, terrorists, rapists, instead of a simple family of factory workers.

Where they have taken the terribly dangerous writers, lawyers and doctors is anyone's guess. We speculate and fear, we pass on rumors and wait for the boy scout to return, but he has not. The excuse for this round-up—for some reason they like to have excuses, no matter how off-the-wall—is that this is punishment because somebody took a pot shot at a German air force officer. That is all.

Every one at Cafe Le Jazz Hot makes jokes about how I am the last virgin in Paris. Celeste announced today they are going to have me stuffed and stuck in a case in a museum, Le Musee des Hommes. I said that was fine with me if I could be stuffed with roast chicken and veal chops and steaks. Henri said how about his salami. Sometimes what they say makes me blush inside but I remain very cool. I said, no thank you, your salami isn't kosher.

Then afterward when Henri was walking me to the Metro, he asked me if that was why I wouldn't sleep with him, because he isn't Jewish. He wanted to have a very serious discussion on the sidewalk about what I said as a joke to shut them all up. I ended up having to kiss him in a doorway. Then he tried again to put his hand up under my sweater. I said, Don't you try to do things by degrees, Henri. You won't move me along that way. When I decide, I will do the whole thing, but until then, don't paw at me, I think it's vulgar. He got mad and went off, but I know the problem isn't going to go away. ■

Malka
THE FAT GIRL

BY SANDI WISENBERG

Finally Malka the fat girl was granted an audience with the great Rabbi H——— of B———. She stood in his receiving room and raised her eyes to glance, quick as a sparrow, at his long face. It was gray, the color of a rag after dusting a very dirty room, she thought. Appalled at her own disrespect, Malka asked herself how she could allow such an image into her thoughts. "O forgive me, my Father," her mind whispered.

"He must see me as a cow," she thought in her contrition, "a dumb staring stupid animal, while he is a man that converses with God Himself, and who, it is said, can pierce the soul, the very heart, of all who come to him."

Again she peeked at the tall rectangular form before her. "Rabbi," she trembled, her skin white as the inside of a radish, "Rabbi, how can I satisfy my longing to serve God?"

"Do you know the three womanish *mitzvot?*" the rabbi asked brusquely. It was obvious to Malka that he felt she should not be taking up his time if she were merely ignorant. A girl could learn the three commandments from anyone, even a woman.

"Yes," she whispered tremulously,

SANDI WISENBERG is a second-generation native Southerner and a 1983 Graduate of the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. She is a reporter for the Miami Herald. © Copyright Sandi Weisberg 1985. All Rights Reserved.

her small voice rising from her vast body like a tiny stream of smoke from a factory chimney. "*Echad*, one, pinching off a piece of *challah* before it is baked, and burning it, as a remembrance of the sacrifices at the destroyed Temple; *sh'tayim*, lighting the candles, one for each member of the family, on *Shabbat*; and *shalosh*, bathing oneself in the ritual bath after the, unclean times."

Although Malka stumbled over the Hebrew words for numbers, and barely emitted the last phrase—so embarrassed was she at the content, that the rabbi, purest of men, would know that the girl before him trailed blood once a month—she felt a flush of pride. She knew some Hebrew. Her father, after all, was a scholar—though distinguished more by diligence than by brilliance. She awaited the rabbi's approval.

Instead, he frowned. "Why did you come to me?" he thundered, the roar in his voice seeming to emanate from the toes of his shoes. "What you have recited is all you need to know."

At her silence, he asked her abruptly, "Are you not married?" and began to leaf through a thick book.

"I am not betrothed. I am from a poor family, and my father wants to marry me to a scholar, but there is nothing for my dowry. That is why I work all day in the dairy."

He snapped the book shut. "Ah! The longing you feel is for a *zaddik*, a wise and holy man. When the matchmaker has found one for you, then may you fasten your prayers to him, then may you light the candles for your own brood, then may you use the *mikva*, and in the time to come, may you sit at his feet and receive the pleasures of Paradise through him."

And then, with impatience but not unkindness, he bade her good-day.

Malka stood in the anteroom, strange clouds sweeping across her vision. Gone was the hope that had sustained her almost an entire year, since she had first conceived of this visit. What was next but to follow her own stolid shoeprints on the dusty road back to her village? But she did not move. Just as despair had replaced hope, so now anger displaced despair. She had sought help, and had not received it from this so-called great, illustrious rabbi. "A man who calls himself holy yet acts in such a manner must, at best, be possessed by a demon!" she thought fiercely.

And in her white blindness, she grabbed for something hard and sharp, which she could hurl at the man who had not provided balm for her needy soul. Her hand found an object—perhaps a stone, perhaps a paperweight—on a cold, smooth table. But as her fingers closed around it, the rock turned soft as a pillow. A lovely smell wafted up to her. "Bread," she thought to herself. "What sort of a rabbi leaves food lying about?" She slipped it into her apron pocket. "At least," she smiled to herself, "I am not leaving his house empty-handed."

Her vision cleared. She turned to leave through the thick wooden door and began the slow walk home. As Malka approached her family's decrepit hut, her mother's harsh words fell upon her. "Malka, why did you wander off at the very moment we needed you? My big fat cow of a daughter, we needed your capable hands to pump out the milk in our scrawny she-cattle half the size of your great fat legs. Half the size of your calves, the sight of which is enough to scare a prince and the Czar's entire regiment." Malka's mother cackled like an outcast of the heavens. Malka spat over her shoulder, to ward off the Evil Eye.

But Malka was too late to fend off the devil. She had slipped Satan himself into her pocket at the rabbi's house. The devil had stationed himself there as temptation incarnate, in the form of a piece of bread. This is how that came to be: When the rabbi's wife baked the twin Sabbath loaves one Friday afternoon a fortnight before, she pinched off an end of dough to throw into the oven as sacrifice. Then she left the morsel on the kneading board, turning her back to it to receive the scolding of her husband over the temperature of his tea. In those few minutes, the devil entered the small lump of dough.

With one incantation, he transported his bread-self to a fine marble-topped table in the rabbi's receiving room. With another lightning-swift curse, he transformed himself from a bit of fine white Sabbath *challah* dough into a piece of black workaday bread.

When the *rebbetsin* returned to the oven, she looked for the small pinch of *challah* dough. Then she surmised she must have already thrown it in the fire, blaming her confusion on her silly woman-brain. Later she noticed the black crust on the table, but, believing everything in her blessed husband's chambers, as in God's universe, to have a place, she had let it be. She did not exert herself in service to her husband's receiving room. Once a week she swished a feather duster over the mahogany tables and chairs and china cabinet.

And thus, the devil-bread had waited, more than two weeks, for the elements of the rabbi's chastisement and the supplicant's anger to converge. Each day he had cast another spell to make his bread-self soft and fragrant and warm, as if newly baked.

Malka had forgotten about the crust until that moment, as she sat on the rickety fence marking her family's sparse portion of rented pastureland, seeking solace from her mother's remonstrances. She reached instinctively into her pocket, where she often kept tidbits to sweeten the bitterness of her life and to dull the constant pain of reproach. How long her life had followed this pattern, she did not know. She feared to examine the history of her own being, fearful it would reveal a tale of never-ceasing pain—and that the future would be but a repetition of the past. Her life, when she visualized its form, seemed a long tunnel that eventually curved back to its own entrance.

These thoughts infusing her feelings, Malka wrapped her slender fingers around the warm morsel and brought it unthinkingly to her tongue. But she stopped herself before the first bite. Since she had just returned (albeit disappointed, not refreshed, not infused with holiness and joy) from the presence of the rabbi, she felt an obligation to recite a *b'racha*, a blessing, before ingesting the crust of bread. She knew well the prayers over food—she mumbled them as her father recited them before the family meals—but she did not repeat them when she nibbled, clandestinely, while leading the cows to the field or while carting the buckets of milk over her stooped but sturdy shoulders. That she was remiss in this way was one source of her guilt and sorrow.

The reasons she did not recite the prayer before each of the seemingly endless bites were manyfold. She did not feel they were true meals in the eyes of God—they were stolen: a small apple removed carefully from the wooden barrel in the cellar, a candy traded at the market in exchange for an extra tin cup of milk drawn from her family's supply, grains that had been set aside in the fields for collection by the landless poor. Her behavior, grown to habit, made her

feel as if she were a man seeking God's benediction before the slaughter of a cow he had stolen from his brother. "Better not pray," she thought at these times, "and thus avoid calling God's attention to my eating."

Furthermore, Malka felt that these snacks extended far beyond the meals that sustained her. She did not feel right in thanking God for allowing her to feed beyond satiety.

But this time, this morsel from the house of the rabbi, called for a *b'racha*. The bread, after all, must contain some holiness, some vestige of God's presence. Such bread as this must be accustomed to blessings recited in the sacred tongue, in inspired divine cadence. The least Malka the fat girl could do was offer up the ordinary *b'racha* over the bread.

A hope then pushed its way through her guilt. Perhaps, she thought, somehow the bread was the rabbi's answer. Perhaps he had blessed it, just for Malka, before her arrival, and it contained the secrets of her life to be. The rabbi, perhaps, was not as cold and unfeeling as she had imagined. The crust had been sitting there, had it not? And crumbs, she felt, would not be permitted—without some higher purpose—to dishonor the anteroom of a rabbi.

So the girl addressed God, holding the morsel high in the palm of her hand. She brought it back to her face, inhaling its fragrance. She recited softly: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who makes bread grow from the earth."

At these unexpected words, the devil felt his powers diminish. They say that God hears the prayers of everyone. That day, He heard the prayer of Malka, and He heard the prayer, emanating from the unconscious of the devil: "O Lord, Who is highest among the holy, grant me again my life with You in the heavens."

At these words, the Lord dispatched a messenger, an angel, in the form of a beggar. He appeared, asleep in the pasturegrasses, before Malka. So startled was she that she dropped the devil-morsel. It rolled toward the foot of the dirty man. He did not awaken. "He must be hungry and worn," Malka thought, her own particular hunger rising to join a great universal hunger which emcompassed his. "It would truly be a *mitzvah*, a good deed, to give this poor traveling beggar my lowly, but double-blessed crust of bread." She placed it in his upturned hat. This caused the hat to disappear. Undaunted, she placed the bread in the man's hand, curling his blackened fingers around it. At her touch, the angel awakened, saying, "I must now transport this devil-repentant back to the city of God."

The girl, thinking the angel referred to her, flung herself at his feet. She did not want to die. She was fat and unhappy and ungainly but was not yet ready to leave this earth. "I love the trees," she thought. "I love the cows, their heavy bodies on spindly legs, their patient, good-humored acceptance when I tug at their udders, the soft swish of their ropetails against the swarming beetles and dragonflies."

The angel smiled down at Malka, saying, "I do not mean you, sister. Arise. You have redeemed yourself by giving this stolen morsel back to the kingdom of God. The Lord of Hosts is now cognizant of your hunger. He will give you the opportunity to satiate it.

"What cannot be satisfied by food may be satisfied by loved ones or by the study of the *Torah*. You have not been blessed with an understanding family, nor by schooling the *cheder*. The Lord, blessed be He, allows you, on this day, a choice. Every child, before it is born, knows the entire *Torah*. Upon entry into this world of man, an angel strikes forgetfulness into the mind of the infant. Men are given the opportunity to restore their stolen knowledge. Women are not. They satisfy their amnesia by bearing children, by creating homes of love and light. No one may have both, lest he explode with too many delights, like a glutton after a seven-day meal. But you, my child, have been doubly excluded—you have known neither knowledge nor love. On this day you may decide which you shall have."

The girl's mind leapt to the dried-out skin of her mother, her yellowed teeth and stooped back. On *Shabbat*, the home was not a place worthy of welcoming the Sabbath Queen. She thought of her father, remote, who trudged home each night after 10 hours in the house of study. The eyes on his otherwise dull-

featured face held a glow Malka had never seen reproduced or even reflected in the eyes of her mother.

Was her mother's life the sort that the rabbi had envisioned for her? He had advised her to find a man whose quest she could reflect. But what if the *shadchen*, the matchmaker, did not find her such a suitor? Or what if she did? What satisfaction would Malka gain from a husband as distant as her father?

Without hesitation, she told the angel, "I wish to study with the men."

The angel, prepared for this response, said, "You are giving up the life of woman, the life of the family. You will have to leave your village and always be a wanderer. You will travel from one academy to the other, disguising your womanself. But you are not the first such womanscholar God has ordained. You will meet more like yourself at the crossroads, at the shabbiest rooms at drab and drafty inns, and for a moment your eyes will seek and find the same divine light, and the same loneliness. You will see mirrored, in those same dark, watchful eyes, your own longing for the communality of the woman's bathhouse. But you should not despair. More and more young women will join the community of nomads. Finally, some day, four or five or six generations hence, these women will throw off their men's trousers, snip off their earlocks, and proclaim to God most high and to the gathered *zaddiks*, that they are women, in whom God has found favor. These women, children of your great-grandnieces and daughters of your yet-unborn cousins, will be allowed a choice. They can remain in their own community of womenscholars and perhaps orphans, isolated, rejoicing among their own rhythms, unaquainted with the lives of men, or they can seek to join the day-to-day struggle of life with men.

"Will your sisters in spirit remain in their Eden, partaking hourly, daily, of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, the juice of it dripping down their chins, their fingers growing syrupy, until their entire skins smell of that knowledge-apple? Will they retreat inward, as your father, as the false rabbis do, burrowing inside their *Talmuds*, curling inside the letters of the Commentaries, growing more deaf day by day to the wailing of their people?

"Or will that knowledge send strength coursing through their veins, strength to face the oppression from without, as it crushes the thin bare walls of the *yeshivah*? Will the sisters who carry your legacy stand up to the tyrants and comfort the sick and hungry and dying, answering them with prayer when they cry out for explanations for the strange, seemingly cruel ways of the Lord?"

Malka thought of the early mornings in the dairy. They seemed sweet, compared with the visions of screaming, dying Jews, begging for solace. What could, she, Malka, or her legacies offer them?

"I have changed my mind," she was ready to tell the beggerman. "I don't want to be a gypsyscholar. I want a home." Her thoughts fell upon the words of the rabbi, uttered that very morning. "Why," she challenged the traveling man, "has God now allowed women to serve Him?"

The angel smiled tiredly. He leaned back on the fence-post. "As you may well imagine," he told Malka, "God hesitated to allow women to become leaders—not because He doubted their capacity, but because He wished to wait until He despaired of man before calling women into His service. It is with a heavy heart that He offers women the burden and honor of making the *Torah* their own."

Then both Malka and the angel shared a vision, a tired, dusty one, of black-robed, smooth-skinned womenscholars, throughout the ages, trying to restore the life on earth that God had imagined in the Garden. At the idea of God Almighty, the all-powerful, the holy, reaching the end of His cunning and trust, the eyes of both Malka and the angel misted. Tears dropped onto the pasturegrass, causing flowers to spring up. And their tears fell upon the morsel of bread on the ground between them. The saltwater touched the devil, and he felt cleansed. "I am ready to re-enter God's service," he whispered to the angel, and they departed.

Malka, now standing, bent to pick a red flower. She tucked it out of sight, behind her ear, where she could still smell its honey and clover fragrance. She stared down at the pile of rags that the angel had left in a heap. Then she took a great breath and disrobed, pulling on the brittle material that smelled of sweat. She hitched on the angel's rucksack, heavy with prayerbook, *Talmud*, quill and paper, swung his flask around her waist, and began her journey. ■

COMING BACK TO MIDDLEBURY

now in that town
the jewish men play
poker on wednesday
the teacher's fingers
smell of dill but
the chicken liver
dies in breathmints
behind his anglo
saxon name. when i
saw kike on a black
board i knew it
was me now there
are choices if the
man with the dept.
store doesn't marry
it's not because
his girl's not a
jew, one man has a
shop but it's indian
guess what's in the
back room there's
even enough for a
minyan some days
they bike up north
pleasant yamulkas
crushed like some
trojan in their
pants most have a
wife named pat or
mary or had
they sniff stuff
near the creek,
stop thinking
what it's like to
be jewish in a
small like i
my hands on those
dark curls near
frog alley his
hand on my ass
under damp pants
while my uncle
twists in a bed
that outlasted
his mother wakes
in a quilt from
another world be
fore the cohens
came and couldn't
work before jews
with names that
sounded french
came to the college
wrote music for
easter and then
left town fast

LYN LIFSHIN

Deeds of Love and Rage

BY MARSHA LEE BERKMAN

We are a troubled family. Ephraim left three months ago and Cecilia and I have had to confront each other like enemies who suddenly find themselves at the same party. Yesterday we quarreled and today, dressed in a pair of faded blue denim shorts and a yellow tee shirt that says "Foxy" in flowery iridescent letters, she moves through the house sulking. She is the only thing in motion on this hot sultry day.

My only child....Her dark uncombed hair straggles around a thin face and sad thirteen-year-old eyes swollen without sleep. Last night through the flimsy walls of our apartment, I heard her weeping and this morning her whole face slumps in sorrow and rage. It is all my fault. I can see it in the frown that bridges her forehead. If only I would make concessions, try harder, her father would come back. And so we are doomed to this summer that continues to stretch endlessly before us, a time that hardly seems to be real at all but just a series of minutes, hours, days to be gotten through, to be endured together. How we have begun to dislike each other. By the end of summer Ephraim and I have decided to come to a decision for the sake of the child but now we are still wavering back and forth. Yes, I can tell from the way her black eyes glow with a fierce fury. She is as tired of me as I am of her.

At the beginning of June Ephraim packed up his bags and took an apartment and a job on the other side of the city. He does not have enough space, he says. How foreign that word

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sounds on his tongue. We had begun to chip each other into little bits and pieces. Ephraim will not admit it but sometimes I think it is the strain of the child.

As a baby she was perpetually restless and moody. She came into the world too soon, bounding feet first from the womb. I had nothing prepared. No, not even her name. I had to snatch that also without thought. She cried day and night, refusing any of the usual things, and Ephraim and I would take turns rising from our sleep, moaning with fatigue, too tired to comfort each other for this strange being who had taken over our lives.

Thirteen years and still she remains a puzzle to me. Her moods flashing back and forth, a mood for every moment of the day. A look, a remark, or some dark demon within can change her in an instant. I was too old to have her. Yes, I am certain it must be that. But Ephraim is a religious man. He used to say that suffering cleanses the soul, that burdens are to be borne.

"It is a sign," he said then, clasping his heavy hands together, closing and unfolding them nervously, considering it. To Ephraim there is a purpose in the world that escapes me. There are things that we are not supposed to understand. He prefers the difficult to the simple, certain that God is testing him. He was not any easy man to live with.

This morning when Cecilia asks if her father is coming for the Sabbath, which begins at sundown, I tell her that it is hopeless. "Your father is impossible," I blurt out in a weak moment, saying it passionately, throwing up my hands in a gesture of despair. I can hear my voice rising unpleasantly, and as soon as the words are out of my mouth, I am sorry. But it is already too late.

She turns on me. "Bitch," she says without a sound, mouthing the letters with her lips. At first I ignore her. It is far too hot to respond, to become embroiled in another one of these arguments. Anyhow, what would be the use? Let her vent her wrath on me. Let her get it out of her system, think that her father's absence is my fault. What harm can it do? But then she says it again, and this time she whispers it, but loudly enough to hear the ugly sound reverberate in the room.

"Bitch," she says a third time, growing bolder. The word explodes from her mouth, chilling me to the bone although the sun is seeping resolutely through the drapes and the room is sweltering with the heat.

"Bitch," she says again and again, unable to stop, her face contorted with rage. I feel my heart beating faster within the cage of my body, fluttering against the armor of my bones, and rising, I slap her face, so hard that it stings my hand and leaves an ugly red mark on her skin.

She runs to her room and the door slams shut. I can hear the click of her lock snapping closed, then loud sobs as she gasps for breath. I imagine her flung sideways across her bed, her hair falling wildly over the edge, beating the pillow with her tight closed fists and suddenly I am filled with pity for her and shame for myself.

Through the long hours of the morning she retreats and will not come out. Finally I pound on the door and order her to open it, but the only sound is the steady whirring of a fan. Frightened that she has done something rash, racked with guilt that I have lost control, I take a hanger and bending it, work diligently at the keyhole until at last I swing open the door.

She has stopped crying but her face is splotched with red and there is still an angry imprint where my hand crossed her cheek. She is pouting on the bed, her eyes puffy, her lower lip thrust forward. She will not even look at me. The curtains are drawn against the heat and in the dim shadowed light of the room I see that she has strewn candy wrappers over the floor. An empty Coke bottle sprawls on its side against the dresser. A lonely sock protrudes beneath the bed. A trail of dirty clothes trace a path through the room and end in a corner next to stacks of "True Confession" magazines littering the rug.

"Come out," I say as calmly as I am able, swallowing hard for what we have done to each other, what we continue to do. "We'll make up. Everything will be all right." I try to appear more confident than I really am. "You're only hurting yourself, you know." The words sound as hollow and meaningless as when my own mother uttered them, and I am aware that this sort of logic will never reach her.

"Look," I say, trying to keep my voice steady. "It has nothing to do with you." I keep my eyes fixed firmly on her face although she continues to stare stubbornly at the floor. "It's between your father and me."

At last she lifts heavy lids to look up defiantly. A difficult age, I think,and she is more difficult than most. Beneath that yellow tee shirt with the ludicrous letters, her breasts rise as supple as ripe fruit. Under her arms I see black prickly hair sprouting like desert scrub. She will not let me see her naked anymore. Once I came into the room, catching her by surprise, and saw with a shock that triangle of womanly hair on her body. Now we stare at each other without speaking. Suddenly overcome with remorse, I long to tell her that I am sorry but the moment passes and instead I say nothing. I retreat and she rises mournfully to take a shower.

When I hear the water running full force, I decide to call Ephraim. He is an engineer, capable of correcting the errors of vast machinery. Perhaps it is still possible for him to correct the errors of our lives. I dial his number at work and he answers the phone himself, startling me, as though he has been standing there all along, arms crossed over his chest in a familiar posture, waiting for me to call.

"Ephraim," I begin, without bothering to ask how he is, "Come home tonight. We are eating each other alive."

"On Sunday," he says wearily, for we have been through this before. Ephraim refuses to come on Friday for *Shabbes*. It is too far he says. He is afraid that something will happen before he gets here and he will have to travel after sundown when it is forbidden. A thousand and one disasters pass through his mind. The car will stall and leave him stranded. A train could have an accident, God forbid. A bus could be hijacked on the highway (he has read of it happening), and he will be caught as night falls and the Sabbath descends without a prayer to stand on.

"Too late," I say. "By Sunday we'll both be dead."

"Don't worry," he answers solemnly as though he hasn't even heard me. "I will pray for us." Suddenly I can see him standing in the fading light, his prayer shawl draped over his shoulders, a skullcap on his balding dome, at dawn, at dusk,

in heat or cold, swaying and rocking on the balls of his feet, summoning the God of Israel, communing with his Maker. He is in the wrong century, I think, the wrong life. He should have been Abraham journeying beneath a starry sky, Moses adrift in the wilderness, Jeremiah making his lonely vigil through the desolate city of Jerusalem.

"Ephraim, Ephraim," I plead, desperation overtaking my voice. "Live a little! Take a chance. What harm can it do?" But he is older, more set in his ways. I can hear him sighing and struggling with himself.

"Yes, I'll pray," he repeats again, but he sounds exhausted, as though what is happening to us is all too much for him.

"What good will your prayers do? What good is your God?" I cry, aware that I am beginning to descend over the edge. Then I decide on another tactic and this time my voice is softer, cajoling, "Come home, Ephraim," I say, "I need you. I want you."

I can almost hear the catch in his voice, the hesitation as he thinks it through.

"For the child, Ephraim," I persist.

"It is too difficult," he murmurs at last.

"Ah, Ephraim," I say, "*Life* is difficult," but he has made up his mind. He is firm, refusing to commit himself. "For shame," I cry, and slam down the phone.

Tonight, tomorrow he will not even answer it. Once I let the phone ring a hundred times just to test him, knowing that he was there, swaying silently in the dark. Cecilia calls him late at night when she thinks I am asleep. I can hear her whispering about me, telling him how hard it is for us to get along, how she wishes he would come back. Now, hearing footsteps, I wonder if she has been standing there all along. I turn on the tap and quickly splash my burning face with cold water. But even so I can feel myself flushing as though she has caught me in a disreputable act. Her eyes are red and rimmed with fatigue but she has changed her clothes, and clipped her wet hair back from her forehead. Yet the place where I struck her continues to stain her cheek, forming a barrier between us. She says nothing, her face an impassive mask. Perhaps she has not heard anything after all and it is only my imagination which tortures me.

"Come," I say, trying to make the best of a bad day. "It's time to get ready for *Shabbes*." Before the sun sets we must clean the house, polish the silver, cook the dinner and bake the bread. In these matters Ephraim has trained her well. She obeys me silently, without a word of complaint. I uncover the dough that we prepared earlier, and we take out the bread tray and the silver candlesticks that need polishing. On the shelf next to them a sad solitary imprint marks the spot where Ephraim's wine cup stood.

She places a board on the kitchen table and her fingers move deftly over the dough, pounding and kneading it into shape, her face coloring with the heat, her eyes intent on her task. At last she twists it into thick braids to slip into the oven, pinching off a piece which she burns in an ancient ritual, closing her eyes and moving her lips in silent supplication as she has seen me do. What does she yearn for behind those sorrowful eyes? What thoughts does she think? For the past year she has suffered with nightmares to awake screaming in the middle of the night as though waiting to be released from some dread torment that will not leave her alone. In the morning when I come into her room I see that her sheets are twisted into knots as though demons have tied them during the night.

"A stage," the doctor says, but I know better. She has always been this way. Now just more so. Sometimes I think that when I am old and defenseless, unable to take care of myself, I will have to live with her and then she will vent her stored-up rage upon my helpless body like that dough beneath her hands.

I want to say, "Tell me what you're thinking, Cecilia," but she is far away, her gaze focusing on something else, caught in a web of her own thoughts.

Yesterday to calm us both I prepared a picnic supper to take to the park. Other families were there, too, and we spread a blanket on the grass and had cold slices of roast beef and potato salad. When the ice cream man came around we bought cherry popsicles and sat at the edge of the playground at eat them. Children were swinging, and watching them, Cecilia decided to pump her own skinny legs high over the sand bozes, soaring higher and higher until her face was filled with a strange gentle joy. Afterward, quiet and still, she sat very close to me and laid her head upon my shoulder, her eyes tranquil, her expression subdued. But by evening it was obvious that she was brooding. We quarreled, and later I heard her crying until I finally turned over and fell asleep.

She is still working soundlessly as the heat builds to a peak of intensity and I pause to step outside on our small balcony where we have some hanging plants that are rapidly wilting,

and two old porch chairs that Ephraim keeps meaning to paint. We are on a quiet street at the very end of a cul-de-sac and an occasional car, coming down here by mistake, will turn around beneath our porch. But now there is not a sign of life. Across the street windows are sleepy lids, blinds and drapes closed against the broiling sun. The heat suffocating. From next door I hear the blast of a TV, then a muffled sound as it is quickly turned down. But it is not only the heat which suffocates me. It is the knowledge of what has become of the three of us, of what we are doing to each other.

When I go back into the house Cecilia is still intent on her tasks. She raises her head and looks at me suspiciously without saying anything. The kitchen has become unbearably hot, the sun pouring through the curtains onto the linoleum floor, the futile beating of a fan on top of the refrigerator the only noise that breaks the silence. I join her and we work side by side without uttering a word. Beads of perspiration gather on her forehead and above her upper lip, and I wonder again what she is thinking behind those inscrutable eyes.

"Cecilia," I long to say. "Let's make up, let's not fight," but something holds me back. Her mouth is pursed tightly together, her jaw clenched, and I decide not to say anything.

Instead, I open the oven and take out the bread, setting it on the counter to cool. It is dark brown, the top of the braids blackened slightly at the tips, and she glances approvingly at it. For a moment she seems about to speak, but then stops as though pride still prevents her. I season the chicken and put it in to roast. The sun continues to splash across the kitchen in waves of heat. I stop to take a bath and nap before dinner, and still we have not spoken since morning.

When I appear an hour later I see that she has spread a white cloth upon the table and set out the best dishes and silver, placing the candlesticks in the center. Over the mound of fragrant bread is a green and gold embroidered cloth Cecilia made one summer at camp with the word Sabbath in Hebrew. She has changed again, this time into a clean white blouse and white shorts, and her hair is tied back with a light blue ribbon. I am wearing a long print skirt and a colorful top I bought one year in Mexico, and my hair, which is beginning to thread with grey at the sides, is pinned on top of my head with a large tortoise-shell clip.

I turn off the fan and open the windows, drawing back the curtains. For the first time in days the heat has begun to break. A cool breeze stirs the material and they flutter lightly against the screens. Before the sun is ready to disappear behind the tops of the houses like an angry red eye, I light the candles and stand before them, arms upraised to say the blessing that ushers in the day of rest. Cecilia takes her place next to me and even though my eyes are closed I can feel her hands circling the air next to mine, drawing the Sabbath closer.

"A good *Shabbes*," I say, forcing myself to reach out and put my arms around her shoulders, but her spine stiffens at my touch. Her body remains rigid and she averts her somber pupils from mine, her front teeth biting down hard on the middle of her lower lip.

I set the dinner on the table and then we both sit down, neither of us wanting to acknowledge Ephraim's empty place at the head of the table. Memory recalls his strong blunt hands above Cecilia's bowed head, intoning the patriarchal blessing that always brings such a strange quiet joy to her face.

In his absence I say a prayer of thanksgiving over the bread, breaking it apart with my hands, and then we eat it in thick chunks, greedily, suddenly ravenous.

"It's good," I say. . . . *Very* good," and she blushes with the praise, her tan cheeks turning rosy beneath the surface.

"Do you really think so?" she asks, and her expression changes as she speaks to me for the first time since morning. "You're not just saying that?"

"No. Really. It's good," I say again and I can see that she is pleased. A slight smile passes over her lips and like soldiers on a battlefield it is clear that we have decided to call a truce for the holiday.

But then, in spite of myself, I remark bitterly, "It's a pity your father couldn't be here to taste it."

For the second time that day I am sorry as soon as the words are out of my mouth. A look of pain crosses her face and her eyes linger longingly on the candles. "But he's coming Sunday, isn't he?" she asks intensely.

"Yes," I say. "Of course. On Sunday." I say it calmly this time to reassure her and perhaps myself as well. It seems to sustain the two of us, and we relax and begin to eat with relish. Gradually a strong breeze gathers outside and blows through the room, releasing us, and it appears that the weight of thirteen years does not rest as heavily on her shoulders. The muted light of the candles catches her features in an unexpected expression, and I am startled to see that it is Ephraim's face before me.

As we eat, lengthening shadows fall over the walls in ghostly shapes. Darkness enfolds us, broken only by the bright headlights flooding the living room when they come to the dead end of our apartment.

Cecilia's brow is furrowed in concentration above the slender bridge of her nose. We make desultory talk and I think how far away we are from each other. At last I set out two melons for dessert and crushed grape ices that we spoon into the hollowed scoops of fruit.

We linger for a while longer, still not speaking, and then I clear off the table while she rises to help, thrusting her arms into the soapy dishwater.

She hands me the dishes and I dry them, placing them one by one on the white counter as we work silently, the light of the candles finally sputtering to a close. The smell of burnt wax fills the air. A full moon illuminates Cecilia's slight figure and I see that the red mark on her cheek is nearly gone.

When we finish I hand up the towel to dry and our glances meet as she turns to go. How fragile she looks, how young, I think, so that I yearn to cry out to her as she disappears into the hushed darkness of the hallway. I am filled with a rush of love for her. Flesh of my flesh. Bones of my bone. Then, as though she has read my mind, suddenly she returns and standing on her tiptoes, kisses me good-night. "Mother, I'm sorry," she says, and then just as quickly she is gone.

On Sunday Ephraim will come and perhaps things will work out after all. Who knows? But for a while a least in the stillness of this moment there is peace. At last there is peace. And tomorrow or the next day anything seems possible now, anything at all.■

CHERRIES FROM THE WAR

Blonde and perfumed is my neighbor and her husband is a colonel.
She is not to blame.
I lead her through the clutter of children and out to the patio.
"Come, have some cherries," I urge her.
"My husband brought them Monday, from the war."

Fat and dark red are the cherries,
Cold and sweet in the heat of the city summer.
Dark red and elegant my neighbor's nails
As she sits on my patio and smokes and nibbles cherries.

Surely no redder
Than the warm blood watering green cedars and sweet orchards,
Than the smoke-stung eyes of the homeless women who weep
Only two hours from my neighbor's home and mine.

Blonde and laughing is my neighbor and her husband is a colonel
In a headquarters behind a desk, and every night at home.

Not for her the tears of the hopeless women—
No, nor the sweetness beyond all words
Of scratchy green khaki for half an hour at midnight,
And a bag of cherries to eat slowly, slowly,
Knowing they will be long gone before he comes again.

SHARON NEEMANI

RIVKAH THE WHORE, THE SPRING AFTER

I don't want your grush
neither silver nor gold
only heroin can buy my dreams

chasing my shadow in the dark
growing tan in my long white gown
growing thin, my hair bleached

the color of my skin, too thin
to smile even. When I began,
beauty was my profession. My face

bright, but delicate. Now by night
the mannequin, by day dress like a man,
cursing in Arabic, my french forgotten.

I run from old friends on the street
with their babies and husbands,
want none to see me, nowhere to go.

I run, not knowing where
the fear crept in
wherever I turn, hiding.

Once in a cafe a man sat down beside me.
I remember you, he said, when you were
a little girl, before you began to wear

all those beautiful clothes. I went with him.
Twice we made love, then he introduced me
to someone. Spent by all his friends

but he, never again. Now only myself
chasing headlights in the dark
holding tightly my purse.

In my closet still the wedding dress
with golden bells & pomegranates
I used to wear out at night.

In my mind still, a love song
but the french
I have forgotten.

YAEL MESINAI

THE MIRACLE OF

BY NORMA ROSEN

At one side of Dora Wakin's bed her husband stands. At the other side, her mother. Stuart presses coins in his pocket with nervous fingers. Mildred presses her legs against the mattress. Dora feels it shift beneath her. Feels how her mother sends the mattress to bite at Stuart's knees. Her way of telling Stuart to be quiet about the show. The word "show" had been in Dora's mouth a moment ago, before pain emptied it.

Oh, don't! She wants to cry that out to them. *Don't fight over it now!*

She rests, and feels how husband and mother stand above her like grown-ups at a child's bedside. Feels how the word "show" hangs in the air like a bright form. She lies still, waiting to regain breath. Her eyes are closed, but she can hear perfectly. And feel, of course, having refused to take pain-killers until the show is hung.

"Better, darling?" Dora's mother asks it with infinite delicacy. "Feeling better?"

Dora opens her eyes. Mildred has put her fingers into the hollow of her throat, as if to feel Dora's pulse within her own. About her neck is a silver chain from which hangs a large silver crucifix. It rests against her white blouse as if set on jeweler's satin. The sight of this cross about her mother's neck makes Dora think of how Stuart detested Mildred's out-of-the-blue conversion. Not because it violated Jewish belief—he had long since lost that—but because he felt it was what drove Dora, perversely, to her subject. Dora's subject enrages Stuart: he requires a guilty party. But Dora had always blamed herself for her mother's conversion. It had all been the other way round, she thought. It was the loss of Dora to art in the first place that drove her mother to the body and blood of Jesus, as if in replacement for the more elusive ones of her daughter.

"Don't forget . . . in the corner. . . ." Dora's failing strength forces her to eliminate entreaty. "Would you . . .? Could you . . .?" she used to say. "Would you be a darling and . . .?" Now she hears her own harsely uttered commands. "Put the dance figures together. Do it today. . .don't get tired."

Stuart takes a deep breath, boldly teases her: "You're not worried about me getting tired! You're afraid I won't get it done!"

Dora feels it in the mattress, how he has shocked her mother. Mildred presses at Stuart. Remorseless, he presses back.

Yet Dora knows her instructions must sicken Stuart. He will have to hang everything for the show, arrange it all, then prepare for the opening. Dora, he must think, about to descend into earth, craves an opening! And for what, he must ask himself. What critic in his right mind would come?

For years Stuart had centered his life on Dora's art and helped to guide her. She was to bring them renown. In Dora's sinewy hands—she cannot bear to look at them now—he must have seen it like an old political cartoon: eagle with claw-caught banner—the pennant, fame. He had begged her to listen to him. Nevelson, he had said. Frankenthaler. Large, abstract forms. For a while, yes, she had done beautiful big canvases and then had turned to ceramic sculpture reliefs—heroic, immense. Stuart had had to help her lift the separate

DORA WAKIN'S ART

shapes. Critics had praised her work: "The miracle of Dora Wakin's art. . . ." But then she had changed. Lost her nerve, was what Stuart said. She had chosen "subject." Leave statements to the talentless! Large, abstract forms, he had begged.

The truth is, she had not brought him fame. She had taken away from family well-being to do her around-the-clock work—even when her fingers weren't in it her brain was—and nothing could make up for the loss, only fame. But Dora hadn't caught it. The bird would fly away with no pennant in its talons. After the long apprenticeship in suburban art shows—libraries, barns, churches, synagogues—to which Stuart had fetched a hundred wheels of Jarlsberg cheese, several hundred carafes of white wine, enough cocktail napkins to paper a mosque—they had climbed at last to a Madison Avenue gallery where there had been, following her one-woman art show, a steady place for Dora's work for several years. Then the gallery owner informed them of the change in public taste. "They're looking to invest. If I show a Chagall lithograph it's gobbled up the same day. Nobody wants to gamble." He needed, he explained, the space for sure investment-art. Dora felt more stricken for Stuart than herself. She had not brought him fame.

When Dora began to do Jewish themes as a means of getting shows again, at least in synagogues, Stuart had sneered. Why wouldn't he? He had been trained by her to gallery art. Dora had made him a connoisseur. Only the aloofness of Madison Avenue galleries, bare as bank vaults, could thrill him and make him see the worth of art, its energy triumphing over sterile walls. Dora began to acquire renown in her new circles, but Stuart told her he knew the taste of such circles: menorahs made of little men, each with an open mouth to receive a candle. Hanukah sword-swallowers, well why not? One miracle as good as another. A Holocaust concoction—burning scrolls, floating prayer shawls, all cooked together in the smelter, bronze drops melting into jagged peaks: Art!

Stuart had begged her to try again. The magic names, Frankenthaler, Nevelson, bubbled once more on his lips. But by then David Baum, the young rabbi at the synagogue, was eagerly reading with her the texts that gave her backgrounds for the Biblical figures she depicted. Stuart warned her not to get carried away when she said she would like to give the rabbi one of her pieces in exchange. He had insulted young David Baum: "You ride on the coat-tails of the Talmud and Torah. What do you know about artists, who take everything that's ever been, and lift it onto their own shoulders! You don't know artists. . . how cunning they can be. . . anything for the sake of a show. . . ."

But the young rabbi took it all in stride, the artist's family being for him part of the miracle of art.

Since her illness, Stuart and her mother seem also to have begun believing in the miracle of art. Last night, his voice trembling, Stuart had whispered

NORMA ROSEN is the author of a collection of short stories, Green, *and of three novels—*Joy to Levine!, *Touching Evil, and* At the Center. © Copyright Norma Rosen 1985. All Rights Reserved.

to Dora: "You'll be working again soon. There's so much still in you. There's still time, Dora, for fame!"

The evening nurse,when Dora's eyes were closed and she was thrashing in pain, had piously said, "Maybe she's making one more work of art to take with her to God." And Mildred astonishingly had cried out, "No, no, she shouldn't do that—she should rest!"

Dora counts on no miracles. With her final flickering strength she musters only what is practical.

"Take someone—to help," Dora tells Stuart.

She feels her mother pressing. The mattress bites at Stuart's knees. Mildred makes a sound, pushes it up from deep in her chest. A tormented sigh—"Khunkh!"—that says: He's *always* taking someone!

"Don't dare to criticize!" Stuart's knees shove that back at Mildred through the bed.

Silent, Dora feels their messages travel through her. "Oh, for God's sake, don't!" She would cry that out if she could. But instead she continues, hoarsely, telling Stuart how to place "the Deborah," "the Esther," "the Judith. . . ."

"If you think I can tell one of those dames from the other. . .," he grumbles theatrically. Then: "Of course, Dora. We've gone over it!" After a moment he adds, though Mildred is madly pushing at him through the mattress, "I don't like the Deborah as well as the others." Dora knows it is only to rouse her to some energy, but for a moment she feels her eyes focused by doubt.

"I think"—now he sounds desperate—"It's too muted for that group."

She tells him to put it on a wall by itself. For a moment she feels intent in the old way. Then the focus slips and she gazes past him as if he stands in the path of something else.

Stuart pulls the hair at the back of his head despairingly, then smooths it with flat fingers. He holds erect his stocky, middle-height body. Dora and he had once joked at how, with his sandy moustache, he resembles a handsome military figure—English colonel—as he grows older. He has a small but good insurance and real estate business in the town, enough for a comfortable life with frequent vacations, even exotic travel. But Dora could not live life the way he wanted to live it. They went to galleries and museums on Saturdays in Manhattan, then stayed in town to see a film or a play, because Stuart wanted that. Dora wouldn't have cared if she never left her studio. She wanted to sit even longer hours there, staring at her sketches and biting her lips, digging with her strong narrow fingers into the mound of clay before her.

But Stuart craved vacations. At times she had said, "Go without me," and wondered whether he found vacation women to sleep with. She told herself desperately that whatever happened he must know she was best for him: no other woman could make him feel so loved because she embraced him with arms that knew how to shape something.

Sasha, their daughter, had grown up happily drawing and painting beside Dora. But when she was old enough she announced that she would study business.

"But you are gifted!" Dora had been shocked. "Don't throw that away!"

"Lots of people are gifted, Mama." Sasha laughed in a knowing way. "They don't have to let it ruin their lives."

Dora blamed herself for poisoning all that. The memory bit at her heart. She had sometimes locked Sasha out of her studio: "Mommy must work by herself now, Sasha."

Sasha and her husband had careers on the West Coast. They lived well and traveled regularly. Stuart envied their lives. Yet Dora knew he could not himself have lived such a life, for he was a man plagued by the sense of something missing. His assertiveness, his sudden laugh, his desperate grasp of female flesh, all part of his personality now, have sprung from this sense of something missing. It embarrasses him, this craving for some nameless something beyond the life he lives. More, he feels. There should be more. And this craving for more along with his uttering of less had driven him to become a husband of art. Greedily he had watched as works came from Dora's hands. That's not very good, no, Dora, not yet good enough. Some inner part vibrated with longing. He was hopeful, year after year. The slow accumulation of works and honors. But then hope was dashed. Dora began to create religious works. She sensed how Stuart's own inner artist, locked up and waiting for release, shrank and shrank, curled in on itself with embarrassment. Harps, Arks, Torahs, ragged beggars dancing: he could not bear it! For Dora the joy of work continued. But for Stuart, if there was no fame there was nothing: she knew she had failed him.

Dora hears the creak of her mother's knees. She leaves exhausted in the evening and arrives again early in the morning, dressed and powdered, so that Dora will be cheered by the sight of a mother who keeps herself up. If Dora allowed herself, she could weep at these signs of her mother's devotion, remembering how she had shut Mildred out of her life. Dora's mother has been unable to accept that Dora's work exists. Only Dora's body—once well, now sick, exists. The creative sailing-out of Dora's mind Dora's mother cannot share. And so, for as long as Dora can remember, her mother has been trying to pull her back to earth. Food. Shelter. Your house, your child. As if she tried herself to become Dora's body. With every move Mildred makes about the sickbed it is as if, Dora feels, her mother is at last crying out, "You see—you *see*—what could it lead to but this!" And the resentment Mildred feels about this last show, because she has always wanted Dora to pay more attention to life, less to art, now means the opposite. It means: Detach yourself from your ambition, think—though Dora knows Mildred prays for a miracle

Jewish Women On The Way Up . . . A Special Survey

Studies of women's success routes in business and the professions have been staples of book and magazine publishing in recent years, with titles that have become part of our language: *Dress for Success, The Managerial Woman* and *Men and Women of the Corporation* to name a few. A distinct picture of women's management styles, personal values and career obstacles is beginning to emerge from these reports. What we don't know is if—and how— Jewish women "on the way up" differ from the norm: how our aspirations or work-related conflicts may be unique; how our parents' expectations or conditioning may have supported or limited us; and the ways in which Jewishness has been a source of support or of additional stress.

In conjunction with the American Jewish Committee's National Affairs Department, LILITH is trying to sketch, for the first time in any systematic way, a profile of the Jewish career woman. The survey which follows has been co-ordinated by Linda Greenman, Director of the AJC Center on Sexual Equality, and was developed by LILITH Advisory Board member Rela Geffen Monson, Professor of Sociology at Gratz College and a Fellow of the Center for Jewish Community Studies. Monson is also the author of several landmark studies dealing with issues of women and success: why growing up in an all-female-sibling family is one of the best predictors of a life of accomplishment; how the Jewish community needs to restructure itself to bring more women into its leadership; and, most recently, a study of the aspirations of Jewish college students.

If you are now working at what you would describe as a career—especially if you work in the business world—or if you have been on a career track during the past five years, and if you are Jewish and female, we hope that you'll take twenty minutes or so to complete this questionnaire. In most cases, you need only circle a number next to the answer that best applies, but you'll note that there is also space allotted for you to share any personal anecdotes that seem relevant. We hope that you'll take advantage of the survey as a whole as a means of having your own experience included in the emerging portrait of Jewish career women. In the next issue of LILITH we want to include a preview of the survey's findings; in order to do this, we need your responses as soon as possible. A stamped self-addressed envelope is included here for your convenience in responding. If you would like more copies of the questionnaire, just drop us a note and we'll send you one with a postpaid envelope. Thanks for participating.

(5-6) 1 **Where were you born?**

_____
CITY STATE ZIP

(7-8) 2 **Where did you go to high school?**

_____
CITY STATE ZIP

(9-10) 3 **What was the highest level of schooling completed by your father? Your mother?** (circle the number to the right of the best answer)

	Father	Mother
Elementary School	1	1
Some High School	2	2
Completed High School	3	3
Some College	4	4
Completed College	5	5
Some Graduate School	6	6
Completed Grad. Degree	7	7
(Specify) _____		
Other (Specify) _____	8	8

(11-12) 4 **Which of the following categories did your father and mother's occupations fall into while you were in high school?** (circle number to right of category)

	Father	Mother
Professional	1	1
Managerial (Executive, Administrative, or owned business)	2	2
Semi-Professional	3	3
Technical	4	4
Sales	5	5
Clerical	6	6
Service	7	7
Other (specify) _____	8	8

(13) 5 **While you were in high school, did your mother ever work outside the home for pay?**
1 yes, full time
2 yes, part time
3 no, she never worked outside the home for pay
4 other (specify) _____

(14) 6 **Were you the**
1 Firstborn or only
2 A middle child
3 The youngest of two or more children

(15) 7 **In which of these ways was either of your parents involved in the Jewish community while you were growing up?**
(Circle the number of the left of each response which applies)
1 members of a synagogue
2 contributors to Federation/UJA
3 members of a fraternal organization (e.g. B'nai B'rith)
4 members of a Zionist organization (Hadassah, ZOA)
5 took a trip to Israel
6 subscribed to any Jewish periodicals
7 other (specify) _____

(16) 8 **While you were growing up, which of the following experiences did you have with the Jewish community?**
(circle the number next to each which applies)
1 attended elementary Sunday school
2 attended 2 or 3 day a week elementary religious school
3 attended elementary day school or yeshiva
4 attended supplementary Jewish school in high school
5 attended high school day school or yeshiva
6 belonged to a Jewish youth movement in high school
7 attended a Jewish summer camp (specify)
_____
8 took a trip to Israel (specify sponsorhip)
_____
9 other (specify) _____

(17) 9 **Which of the following rituals were observed in your home while you were a teenager?**
(circle the one to the left *of each* which applies to you)
1 had or attended a Passover seder
2 had a Mezuzah on the door
3 candles lit on Friday night regularly
4 lit Hanukkah candles
5 had a Christmas tree
6 had separate dishes for meat and milk
7 fasted on Yom Kippur
8 did not shop or work on the Sabbath

(18) 10 **What is the highest level of education which you have achieved?**
1 some high school
2 completed high school
3 some college
4 completed college
5 some graduate school
6 completed graduate school (specify name of school and degree) _____

(19) 11 **During your college years, were you**
1 very involved in Jewish life
2 somewhat involved in Jewish life
3 not involved in Jewish activities, but concerned with Jewish issues
4 not at all involved in Jewish life

(22-21) 12 **In what year were you born?** _____

(22) 13 **Are you currently:**
1 single, never married (if yes, please go on to question 23)
2 separated
3 single, divorced
4 single, widowed
5 married for the first time
6 remarried

(23-26) 14 **How old were you and your spouse at your first marriage?**
I was _____
My spouse was _____
(If you are not married now, write 0)

(27-28) 15 **How many years have you been married to your current spouse?** _____
(If you are not married now, write 0)

16 **What is the occupation of your spouse?**
Please be as specific as possible) _____

(29-30) 17 **Into which of the following categories does your husband's occupation fall? Is it**
1 Professional
2 Managerial (Executive or Administrative)
3 Semi-Professional
4 Technical
5 Sales
6 Clerical
7 Service
8 Other (specify) _____

(31) 18 **What is the highest level of schooling completed by your spouse?**
1 some high school
2 completed high school
3 some college
4 completed college
5 some graduate school
6 completed graduate degree (please specify) _____

(32) 19 **Was your spouse born**
1 Jewish
2 Protestant
3 Catholic
4 Something else (specify) _____

(33) 20 **If you answered 2, 3, or 4 above, did he**
1 remain in his religion of origin?
2 convert before you were married?
3 convert after your marriage?
4 Other (specify) _____

(34) 21 **Do you consider yourself**
1 Orthodox
2 Conservative
3 Reform
4 Reconstructionist
5 Secular
6 Other (specify) _____

(35) 22 **Since 1980, in which of the following ways have you been involved with the Jewish community? Have you** (Circle the number to the left of all that apply)
1 Been a member of a synagogue
2 Contributed to Federation/UJA
3 Been a member of a Jewish Organization (specify)
_____
4 Been a member of a Jewish Community Center
5 Attended services on the High Holidays
6 Read a Jewish newspaper or magazine regularly
7 Followed the news about Israel in the paper
8 Other (specify) _____

(36) 23 **Have you ever been to Israel?**
1 yes
2 no
(If you are married please go on to question 29)

(37) 24 **If you are single, what proportion of your serious dates, over the last few years have been with Jews? Would you say**
1 all
2 more than three-fourths but not all
3 about half
4 between one-fourth and a half
5 less than one-fourth

(38) 25 **Do you feel that a future marriage is**
1 essential to your fulfillment
2 important
3 nice but not necessary
4 relatively unimportant

(39) 26 **Do you feel that**
1 intermarriage would definitely be "out" for you
2 intermarriage is a remote possibility
3 intermarriage is an option, but problematic
4 religion is not a factor in my choice of spouse

(40-57) 27 **Which of the following attributes do you feel apply to Jewish or non-Jewish men?** Please circle yes or no next *to each* attribute.

	JEWISH MEN		NON-JEWISH MEN	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
caring	1	2	1	2
macho	1	2	1	2
successful	1	2	1	2
sexy	1	2	1	2
self-absorbed	1	2	1	2
dependent	1	2	1	2
intellectual	1	2	1	2
make good fathers	1	2	1	2
traditional	1	2	1	2

(58) 28 **Would you like to have children?**
1 yes
2 maybe
3 no

(59) 29 **How many children have you given birth to?**
(write actual number) _____

(60) 30 **How many children do you plan to have?**
(write number) _____

If you have *never* had children, please go on to question 34

(61) 31 **Which of the following pattterns did you follow after the birth of your first child? Did you**
1 take maternity leave for under two months
2 take maternity leave for two-six months
3 take maternity leave for six months-one year
4 take maternity leave for more than one year
5 other (specify) _____

(62) 32 **Which of the following childcare provisions did you make after the birth of your first child, when you returned to work outside the home?**
1 paid babysitter in the home
2 family member in the home
3 paid sitter in his/her home
4 daycare facility, private non-sectarian auspices
5 daycare facility, Jewish auspices
6 daycare facility, other (specify) _____
7 some other arrangement (specify) _____

33 **If you have more than one child, did your arrangements differ after the birth of your subsequent children, and how? Please take a moment to tell us about your experiences in finding childcare. If you had any experiences with the Jewish community in this regard, please include them. If necessary, please add comments on a separate sheet.**
_____
_____
_____
_____

34 What is the zip code of your residence? _____

(63) 35 **Would you say that your neighborhood is**
1 urban
2 suburban
3 rural
4 other (specify) _____

(64) 36 **In which region of the country do you live?**
1 Middle Atlantic
2 New England
3 Southeast
4 Midwest
5 South Central
6 Far West

(65-66) 37 **Would you say that your total income is:**

	personal	household
under $15,000	1	1
between $15,000 and $24,999	2	2
between $25,000 and $34,999	3	3
between $35,000 and $44,999	4	4
between $45,000 and $54,999	5	5
between $55,000 and $64,999	6	6
between $65,000 and $99,999	7	7
between $100,000 and $149,999	8	8
over $150,000	9	9

(67) 38 **Are you currently employed?**
1 yes
2 no
(If no, explain) _____

(68) 39 **What is your current occupation?**
_____

(please be as specific as possible)

(13) 40 **Into which of the following categories does your occupation fall?**
1 Professional
2 Managerial (Executive, Administrative or own business)
3 Semi-Professional
4 Technical
5 Sales
6 Clerical
7 Service
8 Other (specify) _____

(70) 41 **Outside of work, which of the following activities do you participate in?** (circle all that apply)
1 professional organizations
2 community voluntary organizations, (e.g. United Fund)
3 feminist groups
4 social or business clubs (private downtown city or country clubs
5 health clubs
6 Other (Specify) _____

(71) 42 **Please tell us of any community recognition you have received since 1980 (e.g. awards, media publicity)**
_____
_____
_____
_____

(72-73) 43 **How many hours are in your average work week?**
(write actual number) _____

(74-75) 44 **How many hours a week do you spend on housework and related activities (e.g. grocery shopping, cooking)**
(write actual number) _____

(76-77) 45 **How many hours per week do you have in paid household help?**
(write actual number) _____

(5-6) 46 **How many vacation days have you taken within the past 12 months?**
(write actual number) _____

(7) 47 **When planning your career, was your ultimate goal to work in** (choose one)
1 a large corporation as an executive
2 a small business or corporation or firm as a partner
3 your own business, firm or practice
4 some other setting (specify) _____

(8) 48 **What has been the single most important factor in bringing about your success thus far?**
_____

(9) 49 **Do you feel that your Jewish identity or commitments had any effect on the career which you chose?** (circle all that apply)
1 yes, adherence to religious observance limited my choices
2 yes, Jewish ethical and moral teaching led me to pursue my choice of career
3 yes, a Jewish educator or role model was my inspiration for choosing this career
4 yes, in some other way (specify) _____
_____
_____
5 no, my Jewish identity and commitments had no effect on my choice of career

(10) 50 **In which of the following ways, if any, does your commitment to Judaism or the Jewish community affect your professional life?** (circle all that apply)
1 Religious observance commitments limit my overtime hours and traveling options adding stress to potential advancement
2 Religious observance enriches my life thus relieving some of the stress of career advancement
3 Jewish communal involvement provides valuable networking that enhances career advancement
4 Some other effect (specify) _____
_____
_____
5 There is no connection between my Jewish identity and my professional life

(11-12) 51 **How do you feel that your being Jewish and a woman has affected your career advancement?**

	being Jewish	being a woman
very positively	1	1
somewhat positively	2	2
has had no effect/neutral effect	3	3
has been somewhat negative	4	4
had definitely been negative	5	5

(13) 52 **Have you ever experienced anti-Semitism on the job?**
1 yes 2 no
If yes, please explain _____
_____
_____

(14) 53 **At what stage in your life did you decide to pursue a career?**
1 before high school
2 during high school
3 during undergraduate school
4 during graduate school
5 other (specify) _____

(15) 54 **What was the main influence on your initial decision to have a career?**

1 your mother
2 your father
3 your spouse
4 some other relative (specify) _____
5 a friend
6 some other person (specify) _____
7 some event (specify) _____

(16) 55 **In general do you feel that the Jewish community in its attitude toward women combining marriage, childbearing and careers is**

1 very supportive
2 somewhat supportive
3 neutral
4 somewhat unsupportive
5 very unsupportive

(17-19) 56 **In general do you feel that the attitude of your own parents and husband (if you are married) toward your combining marriage, childbearing and career has been**

	mother	father	husband
very supportive	1	1	1
somewhat supportive	2	2	2
neutral	3	3	3
somewhat unsupportive	4	4	4
very unsupportive	5	5	5

(20-30) 57 **If the Jewish community consulted you on the best way to invest money and other resources to support Jewish career women, which of the following priorities would you suggest?** (Please place a "1" next to the most important, a "2" next to the second most important and so on. Do not number those you consider unimportant. In the allotted space you may add suggestion(s) and then rank them as well.)

___ day care centers
___ kosher take out facilities
___ transportation to religious school
___ support groups for dual-career couples
___ family programming for holidays
___ singles events
___ retreat programs on weekends and holidays
___ workshops on handling stress
___ dating service
___ other(s) _____

(31) 58 **Of the potential sources of stress in your life right now which would you say cause the most conflict for you?**

1 those between me and my husband
2 those between family and career
3 those between Jewish commitments and career
4 "Superwoman" syndrome—juggling all of the above
5 those between the search for the right mate and advancing in my career
6 other (specify) _____

(32) 59 **Do you consider yourself a feminist?**

1 definitely
2 somewhat
3 not at all

(33) 60 **At the present time, about what proportion of your close friends are Jewish?**

1 all
2 about three-fourths
3 between half and three-fourths
4 between a fourth and a half
5 fewer than a quarter

(34) 61 **In general, how would you characterize your feelings about Israel?**

1 very pro-Israel
2 Pro-Israel
3 Neutral
4 Anti-Israel

62 **In general, do you agree, disagree or are you undecided about the following**

		AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE
(35)	Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews	____	____	____
(36)	Intermarriage is a threat to Jewish survival in America	____	____	____
(37)	For a Jew, family is more important than career	____	____	____
(38)	Every Jewish child should have a formal Jewish education	____	____	____
(39)	Anti-Semitism is at an all time low in America	____	____	____
(40)	It is better for a Jew to be in business for him/herself than to work for others	____	____	____
(41)	The ERA should be passed	____	____	____
(42)	The government should provide funding for abortions	____	____	____
(43)	Quotas should be used to help disadvantaged groups	____	____	____
(44)	Affirmative action should be used to help disadvantaged groups	____	____	____

(45-49) 63 **Which of the following charitable contributions have you made in your own name in the past two years:**

	yes	no
United Way	1	2
local Jewish Federation	1	2
synagogue membership	1	2
other Jewish organizations and institutions	1	2
general women's causes (e.g., NOW, League of Women Voters, etc.)	1	2

Please use the rest of the space on this questionnaire to tell us your feelings about being a Jewish woman in the world of work, your family and the Jewish community. (This can be continued on a separate page.)

Addendum: Question #13 should read: 1 single, never married (If yes, please go on to question 21)

Thank-you very much for participating in this survey. If you would like to receive a copy of the results or would be willing to be interviewed in greater depth, please give us your name, address and phone number below.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER (HOME) (BUSINESS) _____

I would ☐ would not ☐ be available for an interview.

* * *

ot reverse the progress of her illness—of dying.

"Time to go." Stuart presses his lips to Dora's forehead. Dora's eyes are like hands pulling at him from the bed: Don't forget, don't forget.

Then, from the doorway, Mildred whispering. "I'm sending for a priest."

"If anyone," Stuart whispers back fiercely, "it should be someone who has meaning for Dora!"

"All right, then."

"All right, what?"

"I'll call him—the rabbi from that place where you're taking Dora's things."

"You're a hypocrite if you do!"

As the door shuts, Mildred rushes back to Dora's bed, snatching at her hand. "Rest, rest!" she cries. "Don't think of anything, my darling, but rest!"

Before Dora sinks into sleep,, she imagines Stuart hanging all her sculpture tiles. She sees clearly how it is. He is angry. He is smashing with his hammer at the bumpy walls of the synagogue community center, knocking in the hooks to hold her heavy tiles. Then she sees it is done, everything is up. There is an alive leaping of color and shape form wall to wall! She feels she is suspended in a kind of net, and being lowered into a well. She is happy. Her work is there.

She awakens to a new turmoil of voices. Among them Sasha—cool, distanced Sasha, whose voice she had heard on the phone extension: "Call me if it's really serious next time, Daddy. I can't miss work all this much." Then Mildred's voice rising hysterically: "He smashed her work! It will kill her!"

"It was those rotten walls!"—Stuart—miserable, furious—"The goddam hook fell out! One lousy piece got smashed!"

Someone notices Dora is awake and listening. "Oh, Mother, you'll make a thousand more," says Sasha brightly. And her husband: "Yes, a thousand!"

What has Sasha told him to make him echo that hard-hearted cheerfulness? "My mother was home all day but she was never really there. . ."?

David Baum, the young rabbi, is leaning over her bed. His voice, too, sounds the strange note of cheerfulness. "Hello, Dora, I can't wait till we have another of our learning sessions together!"

"Bring me the one I gave you," she whispers hoarsely.

"Gladly, Dora."

"Let Dora rest!" her mother wails. "How can she rest with so many in the room!"

Dora sleeps after they go. Then she hears David Baum's soft voice: "I'm putting it on the table here, Dora."

"No. Here. On my bed. Under my arm where I can feel it."

"Goodnight, then, Dora. Till soon."

She feels herself sink once more toward the well. A fluid motion, a shape she pursues, flickers there. She is awakened again by Stuart's voice crying out, "My God!" Over and over. There are sounds of people rushing about. Then her mother: "My God! Yes, why shouldn't I believe it? A miracle!" Sasha: "What? Daddy, *what?*"

Stuart's voice, broken by sobs, answers. "The pulverized clay was in the car trunk, I tell you! It can't happen, but it did! It's the one that smashed! Atom by atom it must have risen through the trunk lid and reassembled itself, because Dora willed it! But the thing is, it's even better! The blues and greens are deeper, there's something magnificent. . .all the trivial stuff burned away. This is what Dora was capable of all along! Her best energies can do that!"

Dora feels the mattress creak and shake. When she opens her eyes she sees that her mother is kneeling at one side of the bed. She throws her arms across Dora's bony hips. Stuart kneels at the other side of the bed. He reaches across and clenches Dora's wasted arms in his fists. Dora is afraid she won't be able to breathe. Sasha slowly approaches the foot of the bed and looks down, weeping.

"How hard you worked to do that, my poor Mama!"

Dora thinks indignantly, *Is it possible? They all want to believe this miracle about clay binding itself into sculpture?* But that was something she had done every day! The real miracle was that she, a self-wasted woman, had been able to work and to create at all.

She wrenches her head up from the pillow so that she can cry out at them: "I am the one who was the miracle! If only I had worked harder!" But just then she feels herself sink deeper into the well where the work beckons. More and more the image at the bottom of the well resembles a large piece of clean canvas. With a last convulsion of her body, she reaches out to stretch it on her frame. ■

I. *Di rayze aheym*/The journey home

1. *Der fentster*/ The window

She looks out the window.
All is present.
The shadows of the past
fall elsewhere.

This is the wilderness
she thinks.

And our tongues have become
dry the wilderness has
dried out our tongues and
we have forgotten speech.

She looks out the window.
All is present.

2. *Vider a mol*/Once again

Vider a mol
she tries
to rise above circumstances.

Too much is at stake
this morning
yedn frimorgn
every morning
to see what can be wrenched
from the unconscious
crowded darkness
fun ir zikorn
of her memory.

It is there
di gantse geshikhte
fun folk
the entire history
of the people.

Vider a mol
she reaches out
and tries to hold on
clinging
like a drowning
person
to a flimsy plank.

Ober der yam iz groys
but the sea is vast
un di velt
and the world
afile greser
even larger
afile greser.

3. *Zi flit*/ She flies

Zi flit
vi a foygl
like a bird
zi flit
ibern yam
over the sea
iber di berg
over the mountains.

Tsurik
tsurik back
back

zi flit
and settles
oyf a boym
on a tree
lebn a moyer
near a wall

a moyer
fun a beys-oylem
a wall
of a cemetery.

4. *A beys-oylem*/ A cemetery

Der moyer the wall

oyf der zayt
on this side
un oyf der zayt
and on this side
Oyf beyde zaytn on both sides.

Oyf der zayt
a keyver
on this side
a grave
oyf der zayt
a vistenish
on this side
a wasteland.

Der moyer
a beys-oylem
oyf der zayt
un oyf der zayt.

5. *Kashes*/ Questions

In velkhn yor?
in what year?
Mit vemen?
with whom?
Di sibes?
the causes?
Der rezultat?
the outcome?
di geshikhte
the history
fun der milkhome
of the war
fun dem sholem
of the peace
fun di lebn geblibene
of the survivors

tsvishn fremde
among strangers
oyf der zayt
on this side

tsvishn meysim
among ghosts
oyf der zayt
on this side.

6. *Zi shemt zikh*/ She is ashamed

Zi shemt zikh.
She has forgotten
alts fargesn
forgotten it all.

Whom can I speak to?
she wonders.

di mame the mother
der tate the father
di bobe the grandmother
der zeyde the grandfather

di oves the ancestors

alts
alts fargesn
forgotten it all

di gantse mishpokhe
the entire family

dos folk
the people

Mit vemen
ken ikh redn?
Whom can I speak to?

di meysim farshteyen
mir afile nit
even the ghosts
do not understand me.

7. *In der fremd*/ Among strangers

Vi azoy? how
she wonders
should I speak?

Velkhe verter
which words
should I use
in der fremd
among strangers?

Red
bloyz dem emes
speak
only the truth
kayn lign nit
no lies.

Zi gedenkt
She remembers
di lektsies
the lessons
di printsipn
the principles

un zi shvaygt

and she remains

silent.

8. *Di tsung*/ The tongue

Zi shvaygt.

Di verter feln ir
she lacks the words
and all that she can force

is sound
unformed sound:

a
der klang
the sound

o
dos vort
the word

u
di tzung
the tongue

o
dos loshn
the language

e
di trern
the tears.

9. *Di rayze aheym*/ The journey home

Zi flit
she flies
vi a foygl
like a bird
vi a mes
like a ghost

Zi flit
iber di berg
over the mountains
ibern yam
over the sea.

Tsurik
tsurik back
back

In der fremd
among strangers
iz ir heym
is her home.

Do
here
ot do
right here
muz zi lebn
she must live.

Ire zikhroynes
her memories
will become monuments
ire zikhroynes
will cast shadows.

—Irena Klepfisz

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BY LAYLE SILBERT

The F

A few months after Ida got a raise and moved into an apartment hotel, her sister Bessie, who was married to a doctor, came over to invite Ida to a gathering.

"I'm giving an evening, a gathering, with Eena," she said, "at her house. I want you to come." Would she say she would?

"You found me a bachelor again?" said Ida. "I'm not coming."

"Why should I find you a bachelor?" Bessie drew back in mock shock.

"Who is it? Berman? I don't need a watch. I have a watch." Ida held up her wrist.

"I don't know," Bessie equivocated bravely. But it was true. Ida had guessed well. The week before Weissman, her husband, had said at the supper table, "Your watch, it's running all right?"

"Sure, why not?" said Bessie.

"Well, you see, Berman was in to see me today. Something was bothering him, his stomach." He flushed endearingly as no doctor should for betraying a confidence. "You'll get an ulcer, my friend, I told him, if you don't start to eat right. He asked about you, about the children and then he asked about your watch."

That was when the plan for the evening came to life. Berman needed somebody to take care of him and Ida needed to be married.

The next day Bessie went to see Berman with her wristwatch in her handbag so she could pull it out and say it wasn't keeping good time. In the tiny shop on the eleventh floor of the Stevens Building, there were watches everywhere, hanging in rows on long rods, pinned to the wall, in the showcase, on Berman's worktable. A good sign, a good business. In shirtsleeves, his bald head reflecting the ceiling light, he remained serious even as he raised his head from his work and smiled.

Taking the watch, he sat down again, examined it with a loop in one eye, saying nothing. Berman was not a big talker. Did he see that it was working all right? What would she say? But, no, he made an infinitesimal adjustment, handed it back and said, "Now it will keep better time. Bring it in for a cleaning one of these days."

Then she invited him to her evening at her friend Eena's home. He thanked her gravely, almost bowing, asked her what time again even though she'd just told him.

"Eight, eight-thirty, no later."

"I'm always on time," said Berman.

You'd almost think he knew why I came, she thought going down in the elevator. Maybe he did. Even though she'd known him over the years she felt she hardly knew him.

Actually nobody knew Berman. That is not to say it was not known in which town in the Pale he was born and from which he left to come to America, and that he had been apprenticed to a watchmaker. It was natural he should again become an apprentice when he arrived as a young man. No, in Chicago not exactly an apprentice. What he did was go to work for an old watchmaker and as anybody could have predicted he learned everything the old watchmaker had to teach him. Until the old watchmaker died, Berman did not wait on customers but sat with a loop all day examining watches under a strong light, any kind a customer might bring in, and then fixing them. He could fix them all.

When the watchmaker died, his widow let Berman buy the business and pay for it in many small installments, an income for her. A business? Could such a small enterprise be blessed with the term business? It was only a small office with a work space behind the showcase counter in which stock was displayed, a desk with a light, and parts sorted out into tiny bins behind the counter. Here Berman worked, sold watches, fixed them, made estimates, filled out order forms, gave receipts, paid his bills, and left every day at exactly seven, on Fridays at six.

He lived in a rooming house on Douglas Boulevard, one of the last rooming houses to survive from the early days of heavy immigration. All the other young men who had first lived in

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rooming houses had long ago married and now lived in flats throughout the west side of Chicago.

How he joined Branch One of the Labor Zionists nobody remembered exactly. He was a faithful member, came to meetings every time and on time as well. Some people thought he had joined because the membership made up a nice constituency of customers, especially if one included the wives, all of whom had small fragile wristwatches that easily fell into soapy water. When a son or daughter was to graduate from high school, the member went to Berman for a graduation watch. During the sometimes violent arguments about policy that Branch One occasionally burst into, Berman sat waiting. What was he waiting for?

There were those who thought he was waiting for the perfect wife. If not, why wasn't he already married? This question irked the members' wives who often depended on him as a guest, usually on Friday nights. He came, behaved with exemplary politeness, used good table manners and left, sadly for the hostess and her hopes, alone. He said good night, thanked her for a good meal and a good evening.

For all that, nobody knew Berman. What did he think, really think, about life? Could he have endured some terrible tragedy which had silenced his real being long before, perhaps a young wife taken too soon? But nobody could remember such an event. It was simply Berman in his nice, well-pressed clothes, his good manners, his eligibility which everybody knew about. Yes, also a good watchmaker. Maybe he put all his passions into the good job he always did when he fixed a watch.

Ida, open, fluent, easy to know, was a different matter. Whoever became acquainted with her felt he or she knew her. As with Berman, where she came from, when and with whom she had arrived, what she did upon arrival and next after that, were all known. Everybody knew she was now living in a room with a bath and kitchenette in a neighborhood hotel and that she was forever scandalizing her sister Bessie by not getting married. Strangely it was not known why. Could it be that nobody wanted her? Or was it truly so that she didn't want to be married? How could a person be so unnatural?

Once in a while, not as often as Berman was invited, Ida was invited to meet a widower sometimes still shaken from his loss, at a Friday night supper or, less often lately, a newcomer so bewildered he didn't know whether to use a fork or spoon as he ate at the supper table, flustered and lost. From these events Ida went home alone too.

How strange that to this moment nobody had had the idea of arranging for Ida and Berman to meet, these two veterans of arranged meetings?

"Why didn't I think of it before?" Bessie said to her friend Eena.

"Because we see him all the time, that's why," Eena answered. "Ida you see all the time and Berman is always at meetings. We'll make a nice evening for them, good food, plenty of tea. Then we'll see."

"Oh," said Bessie, "I want her to be married. How much I want it for her. For her own good." Then she went over to Ida's to invite her.

"Come on," Bessie was saying now. "If by chance Berman happens to be there, you don't have to talk to him if you don't want to."

"I know," said Ida. "If you talk to him or don't, it's the same.

LAYLE SILBERT is the author of several dozen short stories that have been published in a variety of literary magazines, among them Salmagundi *and* Confrontation. *A photographer best known for her portraits of writers, her work has appeared in previous issues of* Lilith. © Copyright Layle Silbert 1985. All Rights Reserved.

He hardly says anything. Is he afraid of something?"

"What I'd like to know is, are you afraid of something?"

"I'm not afraid," said Ida, "of anything."

"Then you'll come?" Bessie said.

"What's so special? Don't tell me. I know. I should get married."

"Why should I want you to be married?" said Bessie.

They both laughed.

But it was no laughing matter to Bessie and sometimes not to Ida either.

Four months before, Ida had gotten a raise of five dollars a week through the union on her job as a working forelady in a women's skirt shop where she sat all day at a sewing machine like the other workers. Right away she went out to look for a place to live. Up to then she'd been in the little bedroom off the kitchen in Bessie's flat.

"You a widow lady?" one landlord had asked. Nobody wanted to rent to a woman living alone.

"How could I be a widow? I never got married."

"A shame," said the landlord's wife. "It's not nice."

"Let Doc go with you," Bessie said when Ida told her, "and the landlord will let you have a flat."

"I don't want a flat any more," said Ida. "I have to work. A flat is more work." She rented an apartment in a hotel with furniture and a maid who changed the sheets and towels once a week.

"It smells funny," said Bessie the first time she came to visit. "They don't clean good."

"It's clean, don't worry," said Ida. "I don't notice. Anyway I work all day."

"Sit down," said Bessie.

"You're telling me to sit down in my own home?"

"You call this a home?" Bessie waved at the machine-turned, walnut-stained china cabinet. "Look, it's ugly. Also there's no cover on the toilet."

"I won't fall in," said Ida. "It's not cheap. I pay alot of money."

Ida did sit down. "You going to make like Mama again? Tell me what to do?"

That stopped Bessie, but not for long. "I'll come right to the point."

Ida pursed her lips. "All right. I'm waiting."

"You don't have to work." Bessie was making a speech. "You don't have to live like this. You could have a home, a four-room flat. You could have your own furniture. In the afternoon on Wednesdays you could come to my literary circle. You would have time to do what you want. You wouldn't have to wash your underwear in the kitchen sink." She looked insultingly at the miniature sink under a shelf on which stood a hot plate. This was the kitchenette.

"You could have a washing machine," Bessie went on.

Ida raised her hands. "I'm scared I'll get electrocuted." True she always sat at the opposite end of the table if there was a toaster. "I don't want to be electrocuted. I'm not a criminal. I'm not Loeb and Leopold. The hot plate I have to use. That's enough."

"What you are is a girl who isn't getting younger. Look at you."

"Every day," said Ida, "I look. In the bathroom mirror."

"I'm ashamed. What's wrong with your sister? my friends are always asking me."

"You're ashamed?"

"You're not trying. Why don't you try?"

"How do you try?" asked Ida. "Tell me," she said sarcastically. "You should know."

"How can I answer a question like that?"

Friday evening of the gathering Ida arrived at Bessie's exactly on time. She came wearing a black velvet dress, short, coming just below her knees and going straight up and down like a tube. Her hair was marcelled and she had powder on her nose and even some rouge on her cheeks.

"I wasn't sure you'd come," said Bessie, admiring Ida. "My fancy sister."

As they left to go to Eena's, Bessie in her last year's black coat with a kit fox collar and Ida in her sumptuous new fur coat, sealskin, which she'd bought with her savings, it looked as though it were Ida the lucky one and Bessie the unlucky. But they each knew that some people looked on them in exactly the opposite way, since Ida was not married and Bessie was, to a fine husband who was a doctor and had two wonderful daughters.

They turned into Independence Boulevard and came to the only building on the west side built of white-tiled bricks, just the same as the walls of a bathroom. Here lived the chairman of Branch One of the Labor Zionists and his wife Eena. She was a large soft woman like a pillow with a perpetual smile for the whole world.

"Why doesn't she ever stop?" Ida had once said. "She's showing off her teeth, the fine dental work she can afford."

As Bessie came up the stairs with Ida following, Eena smiled a little more than usual to show she was glad to see them. "Come in, come in," she said. "Everything's ready. We only have to wait for the guests."

Ida held up her head as to smell out trouble. Eena and Bessie were acting as though they indeed had planned something in particular. If not Berman, another bachelor. She said nothing.

"Come in. Take off your coat, make yourself at home," said Eena.

Ahead of them the dining room table beyond the door fairly sagged under heaps of food.

"You worked hard, my dear Eena," said Bessie.

Ida hung up her fur coat, glanced into the living room, saw everything ready, ashtrays on every surface, the pillows plumped up in the corner of the sofa, the drapes just so, ready for a gathering.

"Who's coming?" she said.

"Oh I don't know," said Eena like a fool.

Didn't she know whom she had asked?

"We'll see," Eena said.

"Like a surprise party," said Ida and went to sit in the living room. She leaned against a pillow and looked around. There were dishes of peanuts next to the ashtrays.

Bessie and Eena were talking in the dining room in hushed voices. Ida leaned forward to hear. Then she got up and moved softly across the recently vacuumed carpet to the entrance of the living room.

Bessie was saying, "Do something. For God's sake, Eena. She has to be married. I think of our mother. What would she say? How she would suffer. A daughter like that without a husband."

"Sh, she can hear you."

"She knows," said Bessie in a normal voice. "I talk to her all the time. It doesn't help. She has to want to. Also she has to find somebody first." Then dropping her voice again she said once more, "Do something. I've tried everything myself."

"You have such a happy marriage?" asked Eena who could

have been giving her permanent smile a vacation for a moment.

"Happy, not happy, that's not the point. A woman has to be married."

Ida who'd come to America as a little girl with her parents had gone to work early while Bessie, born right here in Chicago, was still in school. When Bessie finished high school she said, "I'm marrying Hyman, you know, he's going to medical school."

"You're not getting married," said their mother. "Ida has to get married first."

"That's not American," said Bessie. "A girl gets married when she has a boy, not after her sister gets married."

"Go ahead. Let her," said Ida.

"What's the matter?" said their mother. "You want to be left behind?"

"I'm not left behind. I'm working. Let her. She wants to."

In her clear Chicago voice Bessie said, "You got converted? You sound crazy. You're supposed to get married. Everybody has to."

"I know," said Ida. "Some day I'll take a day off and get married."

Their mother started, looked up from the pan of dough she was kneading on the kitchen sink and raised her floury hands. "You got somebody? You never told me. Who? Quick, tell me. I want to know."

"Like the Lawndale Theatre," said Bessie. "A drama."

"I'm not telling you," said Ida. "I'm busy."

"You know who it is?" their mother asked Bessie.

"She ain't got nobody," Bessie said keeping the good grammar she'd learned in high school for positive achievements. "All she's got is that job. She's married to the job."

So, said Ida to herself, sitting down again in the living room, that's how it is. But it was no news to her. Bessie would never give up. She pounded the upholstery next to her,, noticed that

no dust arose. Eena was a good housekeeper. What was she doing noticing dust or no dust? Only the married tended to such matters.

She leaned back. Never, she thought, at the same time uncovering a secret wound she didn't often admit existed within her being. If only Berman knew how to speak, if only he knew what to do. She tried to imagine Berman playing this role. How did men know how to proceed? Was their knowledge installed as they drank their mother's milk? Be forward. Is that what the mother says to the son and then to the daughter, wait, wait for him to speak? He will speak to you first, for that is how it is fixed in this life. Then you say yes and jump up and down with pleasure. At last, a bride.

Ida shook her head for her thoughts. Not for her. Hadn't she made up her mind long ago? Better not a wife, better not a husband. Why else had she been brought to America as a child if not to do as she wished?

The doorbell rang.

"Already?" said Eena in the dining room. "You told him eight, half-past eight. Must be somebody else."

How could she forget her own guests? Ida wondered.

No, she hadn't forgotten. It was simply somebody else whose importance had retreated under the urgency of their project. Ida had no more doubts. She and Berman were being brought together with one object in view. Suddenly she laughed, alone in the living room lit up like a stage and waiting for action. Berman too, if it was Berman, must be obliged to undergo these encounters. So far, as she had, he had escaped.

The somebody else was the downstairs neighbor coming in from the grocery store who'd decided to come right up, scarcely a real guest. She went into the dining room with her paper bag and joined Bessie and Eena in making small stylish sandwiches. Should she go in too? Ida wondered. No, she would spoil her black velvet dress.

Eena came in as on an inspection. "All right," she said. "The guests will be here soon. You just rest." She turned to go, then faced Ida and said, "You know that Berman is a very cultured man. You will have a lot to talk about."

"I know," said Ida. So it was Berman. "Bessie will get him tickets to take me to the show. Maybe this time it will be modern dance." She got up from the couch and showed what she meant. She thrust her arms out one after the other, forward, upward, sideways and a little back which was harder, then stalked a step in one direction and in another. "Modern dance," she said. "See, like machines."

"Really? Like that?" said Eena in astonishment. "People dance like that?"

Ida was left to wait some more. It became apparent that Berman was late. Would he come at all? Was he weary of endless unmarried women? The downstairs neighbor came in to keep Ida company. A couple arrived, doffed their coats, entered the living room. Eena and Bessie were in the kitchen then. They could hear Eena say, "It doesn't work. What will we do? The coffeemaker is broken."

"Nothing," said Bessie as in the living room the guests listened. "Nothing, just the plug."

"I'll go," Eena said. "I'll get Gordon." Gordon was the only man in the living room so far. "He'll fix it."

Gordon, hearing, got up, waiting to be called. No call came. He sat down. Not long after, the fragrance of coffee drifted into the living room.

Eena and Bessie came to sit down too. "I fixed it," said Bessie. "I fixed it with a hairpin like they say. Only a little some-

thing wrong with the plug. I used the end of a paring knife." Absently she pulled out a hairpin and stuck it back in more securely. Bessie was the only one who hadn't cut her hair yet.

"In that case what do you need us for?" said Gordon.

"That's right," said Ida.

Bessie glared at her, crossed her mouth with her finger to let Ida know she was to say no more.

Weissman, Bessie's husband, arrived alone, rushed. "I had an emergency," he said as Bessie beamed one more time in this life at the importance of a doctor and of being married to a doctor. Ida had seen Bessie beaming in just this way often.

Still no Berman.

"Do you think he forgot?" said Eena.

Weissman shrugged. "With him anything can happen," he said as though talking about a new unknown Berman.

At just this moment as Weissman finished his shrug the doorbell rang again. Eena opened the door.

"Hello, you're late," she said in a tone that could only be addressed to her own husband.

"Look who's coming with me," he answered from the stairs and entered followed by Berman who fussily removed his hat, then stood waiting for somebody to tell him what to do next.

This was to remove his coat, hand it over along with his hat and go into the living room. He entered rubbing his hands together looking for a seat. He shook hands with Gordon and Weissman, then sat on the piano stool with his back to the closed upright piano.

More men in the living room had given a turn to the conversation until then in the hands of the women. They finished their sentences and waited for the men to begin to talk.

"How's business?" said Gordon.

"Not bad, not bad," said Berman. "As long as people want to know the time I'm all right."

"True, true," said Gordon. "Not the same with the dress business." Gordon owned a dress store on Halsted Street. "The neighborhood is changing. Soon I will have to move to the west side, maybe Roosevelt Road."

"A lot of trouble moving," said Mrs. Gordon.

"You should know," said Bessie, "what went on when we moved Weissman's office."

Weissman smiled as though trying to remember that he had once moved his office.

"When was that?" said Ida.

Bessie looked at her in amazement. How could she ask, a member of the family? Then as understanding came to her that Ida was trying to be sociable, Bessie said, "Three years ago this November."

Berman did not say another word. Maybe he never had had to move his office. Everybody knew his small room in the Stevens Building on State Street very convenient for going shopping at Mandel Brothers.

Ida said, "You never moved?" directly to Berman. He would have to speak.

"No, I rented the place twelve years ago and that's where I am until now. No complaints."

Eena now said, "You come with me. I need your advice, ladies. Come into the bedroom. I want to show you some samples. I'm ordering new drapes."

"Drapes?" said Gordon. "What for? You have nice drapes. Damask, no?"

"You too," said Mrs. Gordon. "In that case, you come too. We need your advice."

Flattered, Gordon joined them as they left. Weissman tagged along.

Ida was saying, "I'll come too."

"No, not necessary," said Bessie. "What do you know about such things?" and left, the last to leave the room.

"What do you think of that?" said Ida. "I'm offended. My own sister. What does she mean?"

Berman listened, heard, said nothing.

As if I didn't know, she said to herself.

Then Berman spoke. He said, "It happens to me from time to time."

Ida looked at him in surprise that he spoke this way. He'd understood everything, that the evening had been arranged for them to get together, to be together and that they had been left alone by plan in the living room.

He smiled weakly. "What can I do? They invite me. I go."

"You know what?" said Ida. "It happens to me too."

"Is that so? I never thought of that." He got up from the piano stool and went to sit at the end of the couch to be a little closer.

Ida wondered, was somebody eavesdropping? Knowing the layout of the flat, she knew it was not possible. But if Eena could, if Bessie could, they would be listening. They were alone, she and Berman.

"You always go," he asked, "when they invite you?" This was Berman the only bachelor in Branch One speaking, who was often invited to meet unmarried sisters, aunts, widowed ladies and until now had plainly resisted. Many good meals he must have eaten in the company of prospective wives and their relatives.

"Not always," said Ida. "I'm an independent woman. Sometimes I say no, I'm busy. I have tickets."

"I never say no. I like a good meal," said Berman.

"Me too, but if I want a good meal, you know what, I cook it myself. Sometimes I go to a restaurant."

"I must admit," said Berman in sorrow, "I'm tired of restaurants. But what can a man do?"

Ida had an answer out of Bessie's mouth. She did not give it to him. "Is that so?" she said enigmatically. Why tell him what he knows for sure? For good meals not in a restaurant on a regular basis a person needs to be married.

"I have to eat," he said.

"We all have to eat."

"Did you say you get tickets sometimes?"

"I go to the theatre sometimes."

"The Lawndale, to the Yiddish theatre?"

"Sometimes the Lawndale. Sometimes I go downtown to the American theatre."

"You know, I never went," said Berman.

"All right," said Ida. "I tell you what. I'll buy tickets. Then next week when somebody says to you, come have a meal with us, my sister, she just lost her husband, will be with us, you say, I have tickets."

"Maybe, maybe," said Berman musing.

Ida knew that they would go to the theatre together.

"I'll pick a play. I think you'll like it. Also you never see anybody you know."

"I'll know you," he said.

"I'll know you," she said.

The next Friday Ida, waiting for Berman in front of the Garrick Theatre on Randolph Street, saw him first. She was surprised that she recognized him at all. He wore a gray fedora with a little shaving brush sprouting from the black ribbon on

one side, concealing his bald head, his essential identification. Amazing what a difference a covering on the head made. Was that why pious Jews wore hats indoors?

She waved through the stream of people sauntering amiably through the open doors of the lobby. But Berman, seeing nothing, blundered on. Suddenly he was there, smiling a formal smile.

"Waiting long?" he said and took off his hat. His bald head and rimless glasses caught wildly at the lights coming in from the lobby. "I'm on time, just on time." He pulled his watch out and looked.

"Berman, Berman, it doesn't make any difference. We have plenty of time. I'm glad you're here. It doesn't start for fifteen minutes yet."

He took Ida by the arm as though he'd already taken out a deed on her and escorted her across the lobby.

"It's all right. Not so fast," she said. "Let me give you the tickets." They stopped and Ida opened her purse hanging by a strap from her arm to look for the tickets as slow-moving theatre goers clotted around them. "Here," she took two orange tickets out of the little envelope and handed them to Berman. He flushed. What was he thinking?

"Let me give you money right now." He reached into his inside jacket pocket.

"No, no, not here," said Ida. "Let's go in and get our seats." They unblocked the flow of people to the ticket taker and entered.

Going up the deep-red, carpeted stairs to the balcony, Ida said, "It's all right. Shindler gave them to me. He couldn't go and he didn't want them to go to waste."

Berman came to a stop at the head of the stairs, faced her and said, "Is that so? I wouldn't expect a boss to be such a gentleman. You're sure?" He put his hand in his inside pocket again.

"Of course I'm sure. You think I would lie to you?"

"Don't talk like that. If you say so, what can I do?"

Now seated in the first row of the balcony, Ida said, "Here you can see everything. The best seats."

"Careful." Berman reached out to keep Ida from leaning too far over the thick brass rail. The theatre was filling and in the auditorium hung an air of expectation and the buzz of small talk.

"I won't fall."

She saw Berman turn pale as though seriously considering that she might fall. He caught his breath and said, "For a minute I thought it would happen." He put his hand on hers where it grasped the brass rail. "It would be terrible."

When the play ended, the actors came to stand in front of the closed curtain as the audience applauded, looked for lost gloves, picked up their coats and slowly moved out, leaving programs behind.

"I have an idea," said Berman.

"An idea?"

"We'll go to Kranz's."

In Kranz's on State Street they sipped sodas through straws sitting at a round marble-topped table.

"Good, no?" said Berman.

"I feel like a little girl, like one of Bessie's little girls."

"You're just a girl anyway," said Berman with the air of somebody paying a compliment.

Ida didn't know how to ask what he meant.

The middle-aged waitress in black with a white apron like a maid in the movies laid the check at Berman's elbow.

"Allow me," he said.

Ida hadn't noticed. All she knew to do was to smile. "Sometimes it's nice to be a girl," she said not knowing if she even believed what she was saying.

Berman had finished with the subject. "Allow me," he said again. "A treat for a treat. My thanks to Shindler."

"You don't believe me?" said Ida.

Berman smiled helplessly as though he didn't know what more to say.

Afterward as they reached the stop on the streetcar, Berman got off first to assist Ida to alight with a flourish. Nor did he let go of her arm until they came to the sidewalk.

At the entrance to her apartment hotel, Ida said, "You liked it? It's better than eating by yourself in a restaurant, right?"

"As a matter of fact," said Berman speaking at last as he had at Eena's the week before, "Mrs. Resnick gave me a call this afternoon. She said, 'Come to supper. I'm making a big pot

roast.' And what else, I wanted to say. Your sister-in-law? Or who? But, no, all I said was, 'Excuse me, I have tickets.' 'Is that so,' she answered me, 'you have tickets? OK, have a good time.' Then she hung up."

They laughed in the late quiet of Jackson Boulevard. Then Berman reached out to shake her hand, but didn't let go. "Ida, I enjoyed every minute."

"Fine. Now you have to walk home. It's far?"

"Yes and no. Six blocks. But it's late for me. I open the shop at nine o'clock. But I always get there early."

"It's late for me too." She paused. "But Berman, we forgot. It's Saturday."

"Saturday the same. A big day."

"For me a half day. But you know, you shouldn't have to go six blocks now by yourself," she said.

"Not the first time," said Berman.

In the half light of the hotel entrance Ida saw he could be wishing to bite his tongue. She imagined him walking long lonely blocks home late at night after other evenings. She pretended not to have heard.

"Now," she said jokingly, "if you had a room here, we would go in, and you would go to your room, I would go to my room."

"Mm," said Berman. He scanned the front of the hotel, row upon row of windows soaring to the top floor, then looked at the little frame house on one side, the trees, mysterious and black, along the street and the roadway of the boulevard behind them like a river on which a single automobile speeded by.

He said no more. In a quick move he stooped to kiss her hand.

"What are you doing?" said Ida.

"I'm saying good night," said Berman. "Good night." He tipped his hat and retreated.

Ida blew him a kiss. She couldn't see his face any more under his hat as he moved into the darkness. She saw him cross Jackson Boulevard quickly with his hands in his pockets.

The next Friday they went to Strulevitz's on Roosevelt Road and on the Friday after that, Ida cooked a special dinner, veal with spaetzels. They ate late because first Ida had to cook everything when she got home from work.

Six weeks later Berman did rent a room in the same hotel in which Ida lived.

"You heard?" said Eena to Bessie.

"Of course I heard. A disgrace," said Bessie.

"It's not what we had in mind, right?"

A few weeks after that, Ida moved to another room, a bigger one and Berman moved in.

"For this we spent all that money on food, invited the Gordons, other people, for this?" said Bessie. "Not only that, I don't hear from Ida from one week to the next."

Finally she called. "You're sick? You want me to come over and take care of you?" she said to Ida on the telephone.

"Not necessary," said Ida. "I'm fine."

The next afternoon, a Saturday, Eena met Ida in the big grocery store on Roosevelt Road. "You're married? What's this I hear?"

"Me, married? Never," said Ida.

Then Eena noticed Berman at her elbow. How could she have missed him?

"I thought I heard you were," said Eena.

"Never," said Ida. "I'm a free thinker. We're free thinkers."

Eena thought Berman looked as though he'd filled in a little, that, in short, he was in good health. As usual he said nothing. ■

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Yosepha

BY NORA GOLD

Around her mother's swollen belly swarmed her many brothers and sisters: all sizes and shapes, they laid their hands fearfully upon her belly, or pressed their ears to it to try and hear the life within. Rachel, an intense and private woman, was so transformed at the thought of a child—her own—after many years of waiting, that she only laughed with loose and fearless joy at the wonder and worry of the swarming brood. She let them lay their hands upon her.

His first wife's children, twelve of them, to whom she had been fair and attentive since her death, were clean and cared-for but never made her smile. Rachel was dark and intense, a woman of many fears, and at night, curled closely beside her husband, she confided her dreams to him in a whisper. She told him that his first wife's children had organized against her: the boys and girls all hated her baby, that they wanted it to die. In many small incidents (they had brought her dirty water, they had pinched her stomach instead of stroking, they murmured among themselves and fell silent when she approached) she found a threat, and at night she wept—What if she died in childbirth? What if they hated her baby? Her husband threw back his head and laughed: a virile, hearty laugh, and although it made her smile, a little darkness remained in the corners of her eyes. Do you doubt me, Rachel? he asked her. With all my love for you, and you doubt me? Then the darkness vanished from the corners of her eyes, seeping somewhere inside where he couldn't see it any more, and he—helpless against these fears of hers, these fears and superstitions in which her family believed—did the only thing he knew: He threw his love around her in an embrace—his warm and fabulous love—like a cloak.

For many years they had waited. They had tended sheep on their moshav in Palestine, tended them with the Zionist zeal of the young, read and reread the

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works of Herzl, Gordon, Bialik, and rejoiced in the honour of fulfilling the dream. But they were no longer young, this was the thing for which they had always waited, and they were burning and eager like two young people in their prime. It was with hope that with each son born, Yacov had looked eagerly into his eyes, and asked himself: Is this the one? For God had made promises to Yacov; the God in whom he stoutly disbelieved had promised him great and wonderful things: a future as wide as the sea, descendants as many as the fish that fill it—and yet, son after son, he could see this was not the one. Rachel stood by and rejoiced in secret to see the disappointment in his eyes: She knew him well, and thought cunningly: MY son, *my* son... all of his first wife's children, like so many fish had been spawned, but hers, hers would bear the star on his forehead.

And in the months before the birth, with the slow and wondrous swelling of her belly, they returned to the playfulness and passion of their first young love. They were astonished and grateful, and both of them bursting with promise.

And the child-to-be, the prince, the comfort of their old age and the leader of his people, reached the time of his birth.

At the time of the birth, the baby lay dying. When they smashed open the womb, it lay dying—all around it scattered its life, its hope, the remnants of its belief. It watched the broken pieces of womb and liquid, the warm globulating stuff that had held it so secure—watched it go cold, dry up, in this new air. In an eternity of waiting, it had prepared itself for this instant. Months of rocking wombness, it had planned, prepared and craved this moment when it would open, show itself to its creator. The midwife's hands were skillful and soft, but it knew that she wasn't its mother: It would not open its eyes to her! Not to that warm and blooming woman, whose breasts were huge and seemed the embodiment of flushing motherhood. It held itself back, fists clenched tight and breathing deeply against the world, until it smelled that smell. Slowly, slowly, the being in it, the being of its being, unfolded. Woke slowly, luxuriously and totally opened, its eyes opened, it presented itself naked, unfinished, alive.

"A girl," urged the round and wholesome midwife. "A daughter..."

Only one moment, a fraction of an instant, while Rachel did her summing-up, appraised this unshaped, naked body. Summed-up, appraised, and her lids snapped shut against her like two steel doors.

"A girl!" she cried in disappointment. "No, not a *girl!*"

The midwife swept her away, tried rocking against her breast the screaming, terrified infant. "Now now, now now" she clucked and rocked her. "Now now. Now now." In the midwife's tent, from where they could hear the baby screaming hours into the night—nothing could comfort her—the red-cheeked midwife expressed her disapproval: "Such a pretty baby, too."

But they didn't say anything, and they never spread it into gossip.

For Rachel, that very night, from some unnamed inner bleeding, died.

Yacov never quite recovered. He retired, under some pretense or another, from public affairs. He spent more and more time alone in his tent, thinking he said, emerging only from time to time with his famous clipboard with the pencil attached by a string, to look over his sheep. Whatever he was told, whatever figures, reports or explanations, he nodded his head vaguely like one who's lost his sight, saying "I see, I see" or "Yes, of course" as if he were stupid to not already have known. The eyes of his chief workmen grew shrewder and shrewder and time went on, his profits began dwindling, sheep began to get lost, and there were always excuses....

The man was suddenly old.

His children grew up around him, barefoot with their lower legs suntanned and dusty from playing jumping games, or in the case of the older ones, from herding sheep in the dust. The boys were back-slapping and hearty farmer's boys, which surprised him; for despite all his decrying the pasty-faced scholars of the shtetl, and his dream of being a "new Jew," a Whole Man, worshipping with soul *and* hands; yet something he saw in his sons (perhaps that they were what he always said he dreamed them to be) struck a horror into his heart. His girls, too, were strangers to him: They cackled in front of mirrors, grabbing ribbons from each other, playing women games that he didn't understand, and all he could do was take himself away from them with a philosophical gaze, having patted one or another of them on the head, half-blindly, truly like an old man. The boys, like animals, were always ungrouped, and so were the girls—so he began confusing their names. They all looked alike to him, the girls with their clothes like flags that flapped at him, and the boys with their demands and wants and affections that came and went with the wind.

Yet he had a place for Yosepha, his skinny-legged daughter who was pale-faced and solitary as Rachel had been, and whose black eyes had answered his silent question, with all their intensity, "Yes" before he'd asked. In the fading clarity of his mind, he sometimes forgot she wasn't a son; for he and Rachel had decided, before the birth, to call her Yoseph—so at times he forgot to add the "a" which had been his silent tribute to Rachel, the only part of his grief which even grazed the face of the world; he was not an ostentatious man. Yosepha answered to both Yoseph and Yosepha, as if in her silent listening, in those two eyes like deep wells, she knew without being told, the expectation and disappointment behind her name. At other times, Yacov confused, too, the birth and the death, they became inutterably fused in his mind, so that Rachel and Yosepha, his own mother and himself, seemed like none of them separate entities, but just bodies of different shapes, containing the same deep and passionate nature which only flickered now and then, to one who knew, in the eyes.

If Yacov thought about it, which he rarely did, he would have realized that what made Yosepha his chosen one, his destined, were not separate qualities as we usually label them: not beauty, nor brilliance, nor trembling sensitivity, although she did have all these qualities in and of themselves— but the whole of her, something of the whole of her which bespoke her essence, and this quality gave her her charisma and her nearly frightening intensity. She seemed to have an eerie impulse toward the truth: intuitively knew what was wheat and what was chaff, and sliced through it, not cruelly, not even consciously, much as a rat without making a show of it, impatiently avoids the false leads of a man-built labyrinth and goes straight for the cheese. Yosepha's mind was like that, but it was not her "mind," or not in the usual sense that it is spoken of: it was an impulse of her whole soul, a straining forward to get to the meat of things, as if she had no time, as if her very life depended on it; and she was bewildered, genuinely wondering, at

the shock she inspired, and being called "very smart."

Dresses and chatter filled her with horror.

Her brothers, early on, stuck out their lower lips and frowned when Yosepha spoke, as she seemed to hit with effortless grace, over and over, the awaited answer. Yacov's face lit up and he leaned forward eagerly, unable to disguise his delight at her quickness, the depth, the knife-like precision of her thoughts. There was a glint to her mind, an original, piercing warmth to it that sprang, could only spring, from the wellsprings of her soul; and yet her brothers could not see this, blinded only by the sharpness of it and by Yacov's keen and open joy. Yacov and Yosepha engaged in wild, heady dialogues while the boys sulked and picked at the wood of their desks, and while the girls wrote each other notes, looked over at the boys, and waited for the end of class.

In the late afternoons, after class was out, when the hot winds blew and the sand and dust flew up around the legs and mouth, the brothers huddled together on one side of Yacov's tent, and the sisters on the other, planning and giggling and talking in low voices. Sometimes the eyes of the brothers darted furtively, with longing, toward the door of Yacov's tent; they planned great gifts for him, surprises, which he received as his blind father might have, and—as his blind father might have done—confused his sons one for the other. He ran his hands over their gifts absent-mindedly, he said "thank-you," and his old, absent "thank-you"s enraged, *enraged*, his sons.

They tried giving him presents alone. Sneakily, some of the older sons plotted alone, and each snuck into his tent when no one else was looking. They stood one after the other opposite their father in uncomplicated worship, longing only to serve, and stretched out their hands, laying their gifts, gifts of wood or cloth or stone, laboured over with love, near their father. Yacov, a kind man, never pushed them away; but nor did he draw them nearer. The son's mystification, once outside the tent, turned to fury, but it was quickly swallowed and kept from the others. For though the brothers were close, as close as brothers can be, for this they sparred separately, each willingly betraying the other. And this is the way it has to be, and this is the nature of things: that each one stealthily, with shame, rejoined the group, and each one smouldered within his heart a hate and a longing for revenge. Each one remembered, like a myth repolished, the position of his gift on Yacov's table, and knew that there it would sit, unstroked and unthought-of, in days to come.

The brothers were united by their unshared shame, as brothers often are more united by the unshared than the shared. Each was blood of Yacov's blood, and flesh of Yacov's flesh.

The brothers had been one dusty group until recently, when like two repellent magnets, they suddenly split into two separate groups. They stood one group half-facing the other, equidistant from Yacov's door, but also turned inward and whispering among themselves. The sisters began preening themselves and when Yacov came to visit them, a little embarrassed by their sudden womanhood, they vied for his affection, making circles with their shoulders, posing this way or that, and flashing at him their various-coloured eyes. Some of them secretly hoped that he would rest his eyes on her, stroke her cheek, and say how pretty she'd become; but he never did. He confused their names, in fact, half-blindly stroking some of their heads, and bumbled his way back to his tent, leaving behind him a burning, ominous humming not unlike a swarm of bees, each one longing to be queen.

The brothers and sisters in the late afternoon, busy with their separate occupations: the brothers playing knives, becoming men; and the sisters playing priss and preen, becoming women. And around them all, like some tired hint from Heaven: whirls of dust. The dust surrounded them almost up to their necks so nothing could be seen. It was as if their busyness churned the dust around them and the unrefreshing blasts of afternoon autumn air.

Yosepha stood somewhere between the two groups, alone, closer to her sisters, but a safe distance from there, too. She stood further from her father's tent than the others, and yet from any distance, she stood out: Her face and figure, her eyes and hair and lips had a vividness, a reality, as if she'd been drawn in dark strong charcoal and the others only in chalk. There was a fine trembling in her, an uncertainty, as she occupied herself alone. She half-kneeled on a flat rock, reading a book or trying to look as if she were reading. With each wave of laughter from the girls, she squinted her eyes all the more intensely, as if fighting off her loneliness: I don't need you. The redness of her lips grew redder as she read.

The flap to Yacov's tent flew open. It was late afternoon and a wind was blowing and some birds were squawking in the late autumn Palestine sky. The dust was blowing strong, and his sons and daughters in their groups grew silent, as he stood squarely, framed by the open arch of his tent.

He stood a few moments, just listening to the air and breathing it in. His eyes had grown pale and he squinted.

"Yosepha," said Yacov. "Where is Yosepha?"

She leapt to her feet, like an awkward young colt, and again: that fineness in her, the vividness of her features and the trembling behind her white, sensitive skin.

"Here, father!" she cried tremulously.

"Well," Yacov said impatiently. "*come* to me."

She walked, then, eagerly to her father, aware of being watched, aware of the gloomy and ominous packs to her left and right: one heavy and male, the other shrill and shrieking like birds. She felt the hatred like a force, and her knees trembled as she walked between them.

When she reached Yacov she stood before him and he put his hand gently on her head. He squinted again, without smiling, first at the brothers, then at the sisters, with that intense searching stare of the blind. They watched him, too, their furry-haired old father with his hand on Yosepha's head—Yosepha, who looked, with her back to them, like a slender young boy, sensitive and untouched by the sun which had burnt them all brown. Yacov had one hand on her head, and with the other he reached inside his coat, and drew from it a small beautifully-bound book and placed it in her hands. Yosepha looked up at him with wonder; breathlessly, she stared.

Yacov took his hand from her head, looked blindly once again at the two clouds of dust, and then suddenly, like a monarch, turned on his heel and reentered his tent. The tent-flap dropped behind him like a slap.

Holding the book with one hand on her head, Yosepha sauntered her way back, between her brothers and sisters, to her rock.

The book looked like a crown in the sun.

2.

Twenty-two years passed. Twenty-two years came and were gone, since the day Yacov had publicly isolated and blessed his daughter. Twenty-two years less seven days since Yosepha's brothers and sisters had taken her on a trip to the market, and abandoned her on the way home, on a dark road at twilight. That same stretch of time since Yosepha had learned what it was to be truly alone in the world, to rely upon strangers but not to trust them, to carve for herself whatever shape of a life her destiny, her gifts, and her misfortunes permitted her. She had landed in relatively good hands—it could have been worse: A wagonload of boisterous kibbutzniks had handed her over to an orphanage, where she distinguished herself through that peculiar mixture of brilliance and feigned stupidity she had learned so cleverly to employ at the hands of her brothers and sisters. She was sent to university, where she dreamed vivid, multi-coloured, and eccentric dreams, and where she showed herself to possess the wondrous ability to grow anything, anywhere. To the Ministry of Agriculture, she was a dream come true, The Land being, as it was, rocky, stubborn, and for the most part unarable. Yosepha could grow things almost out of rock: she grew bright, burning poppies on an all but waterless diet; desert flowers in chalk, fruit trees in tired earth. There seemed to be nothing she couldn't do, and her genius in both academic and applied agriculture was immediately seized upon. The Ministry was thirsty for solutions to Israel's irrigation problem; and Yosepha had ideas. She applied herself to the problem of irrigation the same way she had formerly, through her father's books, attacked the problem of evil: fiercely. By the time she had been away from home seventeen years, she had six kibbutzim in the north irrigating with her new method; five after that, she was made Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture; and several weeks after that, consistent with one of her strange, vivid, and multi-coloured dreams, drought struck the land.

The drought struck hard, and nowhere so hard as in the South, where unbeknownst to Yosepha, her father's sheep grew thin and keeled over, one after the other. The "crisis in the South," as it came to be called, occupied Yosepha's thoughts night and day. She remembered very little of her home or her father, other than the warmth of his body when he stood near her or touched her on the head; and the dank, sharp odour of his sheepskin tent. She had hoped for months he would come and find her, and when he didn't, she discovered in herself a bitterness towards him so deep that it all but eclipsed the hatred of her brothers and sisters. As time went on, she thought about them all less and less, and threw herself into her new surroundings as thoroughly as she had wiped out the old. She retained, however, a horror for dryness and dust, and a fascination with water; and these elements, though never thought about, were deep in her, and moved her through her search to irrigate with a kind of irrefutable force, and an almost flawless intuition.

She found water; and she dreamed of watering the South: bursting the desert into bloom, giving life to new and unheard of flowers, colouring the desert purple and red. She infected the Prime Minister with her dream, and funds for projects poured her way. He said to her, "I will bring you the farmers from the South, and you will teach them all to irrigate. You will fill our deserts with life."

They flowed from the South to Yosepha's Institute: herdsmen, farmers, millers, kibbutzniks, and shepherds, all of them with that struck, panicked look in the eye of the man who has watched his sheep, his cattle, or his fieldcrops die—and thought, as baldly as this, "I, too, can die." Nothing less than mad desperation would have brought men, grown men, to the feet of this pale and scrawny woman—a woman, yet, who was not married, and a woman who had been to the university.

They came to Yosepha in droves, and sat at her feet.

One day in August, when Yosepha was finishing her daily inspection of the Institute, a young man approached her. To Yosepha he looked like all the others, crude and hairy, and giving off a pungent smell, although in some way handsome with his rough good looks. Like the others, he was obsequious—because of his need, Yosepha thought instantly. She could tell that in another situation, there might be dignity in this man.

"Are you the director?" he asked her.

"I am."

"I beg of you to help us."

As in countless times before, Yosepha asked the whereabouts (the South, of course), the nature of the crop, the history, the size of the moshav, and so on. Only at the end, when she had established that here was a case in which she could be of service, did she ask more personal questions. A family moshav? The age of the father? The number of sons? And then, the name.

On seeing before her her brother Reuven, Yosepha's first reaction was an almost physical revulsion. So this was it: This hairy being in need was now bowing before her—this being, How dare he live! Rushing back at Yosepha like water came the terror on the road that night, the strangers, the coldness, that big stone building with twelve to a room. The fear, the hatred, the fear. And Yosepha excused herself from the stranger.

When she returned, she said to him,

"We are very busy here, as you can see, and very short-staffed. There is no point teaching you alone; according to our policy, it is necessary for all those involved in our project to understand the underlying principle. Go home, and bring back with you every member of your family—all your brothers and sisters, and your father, as well. Then we can help."

Reuven protested: His father was too old, there was too much work to be done at home, no way could everyone be spared at once. Yosepha shrugged. "I'm sorry, then," she said.

Not until Pesach did Reuven return. From the window of the Institute, Yosepha watched the arrival of the big, dust-covered jeep as it rattled its way up to the entrance. Out of the jeep tumbled six men and six women, one after the other, all of them dark and dusty from the journey. Yosepha knew them immediately, and had to turn away.

"Give me a few minutes," she said to her secretary, "before bringing in this new group. And make some tea, please—mint is what they like."

It was starting to come back to her. She sat behind the desk in her office, she sat behind it as behind a shield, and covered her eyes and bowed her head. In another time, it might have looked like praying.

—What should I do, God, what can I say to them? And then—Can I forgive?

It had cost her not to, and she knew it. It had cost her to wipe out their memories, but to nurture the hatred, to preserve and feed her seething, nameless anger. She had not hated her brothers and sisters, but herself, she had hated being small and afraid on that road. And

she hated her father, too: It was his love that had spawned their hatred; their hatred was, after all, as natural as bacteria feeding on milk in the sun. No, she could not forgive him for cursing her thus: she would not release the past, she would not betray. . . .

Her secretary knocked, motioned the visitors in ahead of her, then followed with a tray of tea which she set on Yosepha's desk, and left. Yosepha counted the glasses of tea: fourteen. Fourteen Duralex glasses, huddled together on the tray, like a family. No one glass could be moved so it was touching no other.

Still not looking up, Yosepha said, "Help yourselves to tea," and she herself took a glass, and began drinking, still on her feet. They came forward to take their tea, and at her invitation, sat down on the sofas in her office, sipping. They sat and she stood. The sun shone in from the window behind her, and touched the top of her head. She put down her tea and looked at them.

Their eyes were watching her, every single pair, and as Yosepha gazed into them, one after another, she felt herself weaken. For strength, she looked away from them to the far corner of the room, and there, suddenly, she saw her old father.

My God, how you've aged! she thought.

Yosepha could not speak, and continued to stare at them all, while tears began dripping slowly at first, then flooded in a torrent, down her face. They stared at her in astonishment, and gesturing with one hand, she said, as if in explanation,

"I am your sister Yosepha."

Brother looked at brother, frightened; sister looked at sister. Only the old man at the back of the room rose from his chair, and spoke:

"Yosepha," he said.

"Do not be afraid," said Yosepha to her brothers and sisters, seated with bowed heads before her. "The past is passed. I will restore the life to your land and your sheep, you will be rich and prosper. I will take care of you, for you are my family."

And then she turned to Yacov, the old man, staring toward her voice as though listening to a dream. She went over to him and put her hands on his cheeks. Softly, and from a place so deep in her, she herself was surprised,

"You I forgive," she said. ■

BAS MITZVAH

Lydia
thirteen weeks old

creeps up
the highest step
of the holy of holies

singing one note
the only one she knows

I am wearing
a wig & short dress.

The Torah is dancing around
the room, holding us up.

Leah Bluma
in the old temple
the one they tore down
one pigeon is perching in the choir loft

the ladies room smells of old ladies
the pink paint peeling
in a ray of sunlight;
there is no stained glass
or wineglass yet
to be broken;

following the parchment
with one long finger
you read between the lines.

SUZANNE BERNHARDT

SUZANNE BERNHARDT's poems have been published in Voices Within the Ark: The Modern Jewish Poets *and various literary journals, including* Shirim *and* Agada. *She is involved in Jewish education and is currently learning sign language, which she sometimes uses at her readings.*

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THE MES

BY MYRA SKLAREW

Sometimes I believe they are sent to me. God's messengers. To test me. This one never smiled. He stood in the doorway of my office, solid as a tree trunk. The confusion of phones ringing, conversations of colleagues, urgent students, never fazed him. He was his grandmother's emissary.

Which century had he come from? His dark hair was painted onto his head like the Golem's. He stared at me as though I should recognize him. "You wrote the story about Singer," he announced. And then he told me his name. Surely I had never met him before. In fact, I had never seen anyone who looked like him. Thick glasses. Inside them, his eyes floated like carp. I didn't know which one to focus on.

He was clutching a thick manila envelope, the kind with a red string wound several times around the circular clasp. I offered him a chair. "My grandmother. . ." he began. I knew before he finished the sentence. I was to be the literary agent for his grandmother who had spent seven years writing this story. Well, actually it was a novel. The package contained a summary outline of the chapters and a letter from his grandmother as well as a few sample chapters. I was to find a publisher for his grandmother, arrange the best deal.

His short thick arms kept making gestures like speech that can't quite leave the throat of its speaker, quick jabs. Arms, moving toward me and away, with that manuscript. I made no move to relieve him of his burden. I remembered a story about Alexander Pope who kept his arms folded behind his back on such occasions so that he would not appear to invite the flock of pages. But a grandmother. And this boy. An emissary in the long family of emissaries. She had written a novel which started with the Bible and spanned three millenia. And here was I, the sacred recipient, with my hands tightly clenched behind my back.

My officemate interrupted her conversation with a student to slyly watch me. But she never said a word to me about it afterward. I knew she wondered how I would handle this one. There had been others. Many others over the years.

The grandmother's novel started in Biblical times, traveled through the Babylonian exile to the Roman period, continued to the Crusades, took in dozens of massacres, pogroms, mass suicides, heroic acts, false messiahs, cabalistic rituals, lingered for quite a time at the Holocaust and then spread out among the valleys and hills of Israel where it seemed to fuse with the landscape. Somehow it managed to separate itself once again, until it rapped soundly upon the door of the last quarter of the 20th century. It was all there, he assured me, in the package he still tried to shove toward me.

By now, my office chair had rolled into the filing cabinet. Soon I would be near the window. I watched a pigeon make his escape from a window across the parking lot. He was clumsy in his hideous red galoshes. I envied him. I would have done anything at that moment to escape the scrutiny of my messenger.

He was so serious, so earnest. He never smiled. He seemed to be taking a reading of my face, each eye deciding for itself. But whatever conclusion he came to, I could not fathom it.

Once, after I had given a talk in a synagogue an old Russian woman named Karamazov invited me to come home with her to live. But first she poured me a cup of tea, fed me three or four cakes, insisted that no one speak to me until I had eaten. She too was a messenger. I knew I must be careful, make no mistake. These messengers were like the Thirty-six Just, the hearts of the world multiplied, who take upon themselves the suffering of all. Without them, none of the rest of us would be alive.

But I said no to Mrs. Karamazov. I said goodbye to Mrs. Karamazov. And I never understood why I said no. I could feel

the messenger recede, my opportunity disappear. I had failed a test whose purpose no one had ever bothered to explain to me.

What could he be thinking? Had he sprung whole cloth from an egg? From the hatchery or the sea? Who was he? Who had sent him to me that afternoon? He had only hesitated briefly at my door. He seemed to know me instinctively, seeking out my face as he pronounced my name. I felt outnumbered by him though I was taller and older. He seemed immovable, like a boulder, like a fire hydrant. He hadn't called to make an appointment. Yet he'd found me in.

"I haven't an agent myself," I heard myself telling him. "I haven't even a publisher," I said plaintively, hoping he'd pity me. "And I don't know anything about novels," I said firmly. This time my chair had wedged itself against the radiator. I felt like I was on fire.

An inspiration: I began pulling open the drawer of the metal filing cabinet. I'd give him a list of agents. I'd find him the name of an editor who had published my article. Let someone else deal with his grandmother. I'd suffer whatever punishment clearly was in store for me. He didn't move a muscle. He didn't flinch. He didn't change his expressions. I watched him as I flurried through the papers in the file cabinet. I opened drawer after drawer, one yellow folder, one green. No luck. Finally I came to the brown paper with an address on it. "Here," I said. "Copy down this address. Give it to your grandmother. No, on second thought, give the whole pamphlet to her, let her keep it." And I spelled out the name of the editor.

He watched me, somehow unconvinced. He was on another track. Nothing I could do would derail him. "My grandmother," he continued as though his sentence had calmly started years ago, "would like it if you could read her novel and write her a note afterward telling her what you think of it. It would be very important to her."

"January," I muttered," nothing to read until January," I stuttered, the words coming out wrong, as though January were a soggy log floating in the sea which I had just grabbed ahold of rather than permit myself to drown. "This is the end of the semester," I heard myself tell him. "See these papers?" I threw them up into the air, a whole set of student papers to convince him. He never batted an eyelash. "I have to read all of this first. Besides, I haven't anything to say to a novelist. It wouldn't be of any special use to your grandmother, what I might think of her book."

He rose, he rose in his chair like a battalion of sturdy soldiers, they all rose with him. The packet still in his hand, he turned away from me and walked slowly, slowly to the door and he never looked back. The place where he had been, that place above the threshold, seemed to retain his shape for a long time afterward.

He is gone now. I do not see him clearly in my mind's eye. But that packet in his hand, those pages which I never asked him to hand to me, the story whose beginning I shall never see—how it burns there in my mind, how it stares at me. How curious I have grown to see how it all began, the letters moving together to make words, the words settling down alongside one another into sentences, the sentences telling their story. For days I have tried to imagine what that old woman could have written, what that solemn boy held in his hands that day. Messenger, emissary, shape in my doorway: Tell me what it was she wrote. ■

MYRA SKLAREW directs the graduate writing program at The American University in Washington DC, where she is an Associate Professor. Her books of poetry include In the Basket of the Blind, From the Backyard to the Diaspora; Blessed Art Thou, No-One; Travels of the Itinerant Freda Aharon; *and* The Science of Goodbyes. *"The Messenger" originally appeared in* Crosscurrents *magazine, in 1984.* © Copyright Myra Sklarew 1984. All Rights Reserved.

Tsena Rena

CONFERENCES

"The Jewish Woman's Spirituality Convocation" is the title of a seven-day meeting to be held June 16-23, 1985, hosted by Oregon Jewish Women. This will be an opportunity for women to join together to celebrate rituals and share their ideas on enlarging the scope of patriarchal Jewish religion and culture. For further information, contact

Ms. Karen Visman
8449 South West Ninth Drive
Portland OR 97219

GROUPS AND PROJECTS

Denver, Colorado will be the site of the Jewish Women's Resource Center. It is intended to be a clearinghouse for information and materials, ranging from birth ceremony guides to wedding florists. The center will also assist individuals and agencies in the community in developing study groups. For further information, contact

Jewish Women's Resource Center
Jewish Community Center
4800 E. Alameda
Denver, CO
(303) 399-2660

The Professional Women's Theatre Group of the Jerusalem Drama Workshop needs $10,000 to complete its project on the reinterpretation of Esther's role in the Megillah. The group, which traveled to the U.S. in 1983 with the production of "Beruria," is dedicated to raising the consciousness of Israeli women to realize their potential in society through workshops and education programs in schools and community centers.

Jerusalem Drama Workshop
Negba 7
Jerusalem, Israel

Congregation Baith Israel Anshei Emes, better known as the Kane Street Synagogue, is a Conservative egalitarian congregation in Brooklyn, New York. Services are held Friday nights and Saturday mornings. They have a women's studies group that meets occasionally. The address is

236 Kane Street
Brooklyn NY 11231
(212) TR5-1550

FILMS AND DRAMA

The daily life of an Egyptian-Jewish grandmother living in Brooklyn is the subject of award-winning filmmaker Mary Halawani's documentary, "I Miss the Sun." Halawani's grandmother fled Egypt in the 1960's, bringing a rich culture with her. Utilizing the motif of an Egyptian-Jewish seder ritual, the 20-minute film depicts a modern-day Exodus from Egypt. For further information, contact Mary Halawani

Sphinx Productions
151 Joralemon St.
Brooklyn NY 11201
(212) 858-4898

All Of our Lives, an investigative documentary about elderly women, is available for discussion groups. Through interviews with eleven older women and archival film, the half-hour documentary depicts the emotional isolation and economic hardships faced by these women and analyzes the possible alternatives. For more information, write

National Film Board
1 Lombard St.
Toronto, Canada

Project Little Bear is a sexual abuse prevention program in dramatic form sponsored by the Phoenix Jewish Family and Children's Service. Performances will be given through the spring of 1985. For further information, contact

Project Little Bear
2946 N. Seventh Ave.
Phoenix AZ 85013

RESOURCES

A series of nine posters of notable Jewish women, from Abigail Minis to Rabbi Sally Priesand is available from Biblio Press. Useful for the classroom or office, the posters, all printed on heavy stock, are $4 each, plus handling and mailing. Order from

Biblio Press
P.O. Box 22
Fresh Meadows NY 11365

"Shalom Yiddish," a unique self-teaching language method, has recently been released by the Yiddish department at the Sorbonne in Paris. The program, which consists of 25 45-minute cassettes and two 300-page books, is the first comprehensive self-contained Yiddish course and is the equivalent of two or three semesters in a university language course. It is available for $239 from:

League for Yiddish Inc.
200 W. 72nd St., Suite 40
New York NY 10023

NSOF Inc.
4530 N. Jefferson Ave.
Miami Beach, FL 33140

The American Friends of the Anne Frank Center (of Amsterdam), Inc., which supports human rights activities in the home where Anne and her family hid during the war, has speakers available to lecture to schools in the NY-NJ area and host the opening of an exhibit brought from The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. The AFAFC is also a resource center distributing material relating to Anne's Diary and the fight against discrimination today. To learn more about their program contact

Roberta Meyers, Coordinator
The American Friends of the Anne Frank Center Inc.
135 East 55 St.
New York NY 10022
(212) 758-6819

MAGAZINES

The theme of the Spring 1984 issue of *Women's League Outlook* was "The Jewish Woman: A Progress Report." The issue discussed various aspects of the lives of Jewish women, ranging from "Women in the Pulpit," by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso to "A Minority of the Minority: The Jewish

Women's League for Conservative Judaism
48 East 74th St.
New York, NY 10021

A group of English feminists has brought

Tsena Rena

"Go and See" or "seek enlightenment" is the title of the Yiddish-language Torah for women, with the portion of the week and folk tales. Tsena-Rena was the first resource that enabled women to educate themselves.

out the first issue of a new Jewish feminist magazine called *Shifra*. The 42-page magazine, run by a collective, contains lively features, poetry, and reviews. For subscription information and to submit articles, fiction, poetry, news, biographies of women, songs—anything of concern to Jewish women—write
Box 2, c/o 59 Cookridge St.
Leeds 2, Yorkshire, England

New Traditions: Explorations in Judaism is a new, independent magazine published by the National Havurah Committee. The premiere issue (Spring 1984), featured an article by Susannah Heschel on Jewish women plus poetry by Marcia Falk, as well as articles on contemporary Judaism. For subscription information, write
National Havurah Committee
2521 Broadway, Room 25
New York NY 10025

A symposium in the Winter 1984 issue of *Judaism* focused on women as rabbis. The eleven contributors agreed that "distrust of feminism" is the key source of antagonism toward women's ordination. To obtain a copy write
American Jewish Congress
15 East 84 St.
New York NY 10028

CALLS FOR MATERIALS

Women's rituals, prayers, customs, new and old wanted for book. Write
Bletter
342 East 53 St.
New York NY 10022

Two editors invite submissions for an anthology of original works of ritual prayer, liturgy, meditations, *kavannot* for mikveh, candlelighting, as well as feminist G-d imagery, naming ceremonies, rituals for life transitions not yet acknowledged, and utilization of art, music, song, drama, dance. They hope the book will bridge the gap between "orthodox" and "innovative."
Elana Schacter
303 Glen Echo
Philadelphia PA 19119

Geela Rayzel (Randy) Robinson
c/o Jewish Student Federation
4700 Keele St.
Downsview Canada M3J1P3

"Supernatural" fiction is wanted for a series of reprint anthologies (the editor's definition of supernatural is broad). Authors will receive a percentage of the royalties for anything selected for publication. Send queries or submissions to
Jessica A. Salmonson
Editor
POB 20610
Seattle WA 98102

The Midwest Modern Language Association (MMLA) will hold a special forum at its Nov. 7-9, 1985 conference on Fannie Hurst, the German-Jewish-born writer who has sometimes been dismissed as a "sob sister." MMLA '85, to be held in St. Louis, her home town, invites papers for the Hurst Forum on her fiction, career, "the writer as secularized American Jew writing about ethnic immigrant Americans"; feminism, literary influences, etc. Completed eight-page papers or one-page abstracts for consideration must be received by April 13, 1985 by
Susan Koppelman
6301 Washington Ave.
St. Louis MO 63139

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

A booklet, "The Pornography Issue: A Jewish View," by Lawrence Grossman cites the Bible, the Talmud and other traditional sources to show that pornography is antithetical to Jewish teachings. The issue of free speech, however, raises serious questions, Grossman believes. To order the booklet, write
American Jewish Committee
165 E. 56th St.
New York, NY 10022

The American Jewish Committee has also published a study on "The Jewish Father, Past and Present." The author, Professor Chaim Waxman, notes that "the price of occupational striving has been the virtual disappearance in modern society of the Jewish father as an educator and transmitter of ethical values." Waxman traces the role of Jewish fathers throughout history and makes some recommendations for the future.

The third volume of *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, entitled "Jewish Women Writers and Women in Jewish Literature," can be ordered from
State University of New York Press
State University Plaza
Albany NY 11246

On Our Spiritual Journey: A Creative Shabbat Service is a *siddur* (prayerbook) compiled by twelve Jewish feminists which borrows much and deviates little from the traditional Shabbat service. It also includes new liturgy, commentary, poetry, and song. In keeping with the *siddur*'s feminist orientation, the authors have deliberately excluded all references to male images of G-d.

To order the *siddur*, send a check or money order for $5.95 + $.63 postage to
Women's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education
4079 54th St.
San Diego CA 92105

Let Their Own Works Praise Them: The Legacy of Judaic Fiberarts, a publication of the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Needlework, shows photographs of needlework done during the Holocaust, as well as later works on Holocaust themes. For information write
Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Needlework
c/o Gilda Joan Hecht
PO Box 4150
Great Neck NY 11022

The National Council of Jewish Women has just published a report called "Adolescent Girls in the Juvenile Justice System." The report was inspired by earlier studies which concluded that a double standard of justice exists for boys and girls. Copies are available for $4 each (including postage and handling) from
National Council of Jewish Women
15 East 26 St.
New York NY 10010

(cont. from p. 8)

well-hidden," stated keynote speaker Barbara Harris, director of Transition Center. (Sponsored by the Associated YM-YWHAs of Greater New York, Transition is the only city-funded shelter in New York City for abused women and their children offering kosher facilities.)

Moreover, Harris said, there are reasons that abused Jewish women may be at a greater disadvantage than their non-Jewish counterparts. One is the historic reluctance of Jews to turn to police or civil courts to adjudicate their disputes. When Jewish women do file suits, they are often met with such comments as: "What's a nice Jewish woman like you doing in court?"

Because of the sacrosanct position of the family within Judaism, Jewish women have been inculcated with the belief that they should sacrifice everything for their families.

"Battered women may go home to their mothers and be told that they were beaten by the fathers and 'survived'," said Harris. "Or they may be told that they made their bed and must lie in it—that the family must be preserved at all costs. An offer of help is the least likely response."

The myth that Jews don't beat their wives has led to widespread denial even when the facts are glaringly different. All battered women suffer from society's tendency to blame the victim, either for allegedly provoking the attack or for not walking away from it. But Jewish women may experience this to an even greater degree. Since it is assumed that wife abuse is rare or even nonexistent among Jews, any woman who gets beaten is seen as deserving it, speakers at the conference pointed out.

The centrality of the family and the denial syndrome also play a crucial role in what speakers considered the inadequate response of most rabbis. Previous reports had indicated that it is rare for a rabbi to have the opportunity to intervene because the battered woman is too ashamed to turn to him or her.

But according to Rachel Klein, caseworker at Transition Center, many of the women at the shelter had approached their rabbis for help—and been rebuffed. "They were told, 'it's not so bad,' and advised to go home and preserve *shalom bayit* (domestic peace)," she said.

"Since the batterer commonly isolates his wife, but he himself remains visible and even active in the community, the rabbi will tend to believe his story, and see the woman as either hysterical or as a nebichel the husband has to put up with," Klein added.

Rabbi Gerald Skolnick, spiritual leader of the Forest Hills Jewish Center in New York City, explained that rabbis are particularly prone to the internalization of Jewish "self-serving myths" and to subsequent denial. "After all," he said, "the job of the rabbi is to perpetuate myths, to teach Jewish specialness."

Though effective intervention may mean nothing more than referral of the woman to an appropriate social service agency, the insufficient training most rabbis receive in counseling and the resulting ignorance about suport systems in their communities further hampers their ability to help even in this limited way, it was observed.

Another myth that needs exploding, commented Harris, is that wife abuse occurs only among the poor or uneducated. Domestic violence among Jews cuts across social and economic lines. All the women at Transition have been wives of professionals, and none required financial help. Wife abuse is also an across-the-board religious phenomenon: similar experiences are reported among Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform families, and batterers and their wives often belong to synagogues.

Klein recalled coming to synagogue one Saturday morning and being impressed with a man she did not recognize who was leading the morning services beautifully. "It turned out he was the husband of one of the women in our shelter. He had discovered its location, and had come to our community for the Sabbath to try to influence her caseworker—myself. As his wife had told us, he was a leader in their community." (JTA)

—Barbara Trainin

MURDER IN SYRIA

Terror gripped the 5,000 Jews of Syria in the wake of the unsolved brutal murder and mutilation of a pregnant Jewish woman and her two small children in Aleppo.

On December 28, 1983, Chaim Victor Abadi, a prominent jeweler and merchant returned home to find Lillian, his 25-year-old wife, shot, and repeatedly stabbed, her breasts cut, her stomach slit open, the fetus killed, and her body mutilated. Beside her lay the bodies of their two children, Joseph, six, and Sandy, three. The little boy's arms had been broken and the girl's body was cut to pieces.

This is not the first crime suffered by the Abadi family. During a house-to-house search in July 1980, a defense unit entered their home and took Abadi with them to identify other Jewish homes in the area. The captain remained behind, ostensibly to search the house. He ordered Mrs. Abadi to strip to prove she was not concealing Moslem Brotherhood literature on her person, and then raped her. Several other Jewish women in Aleppo were also raped, but were too afraid to protest.

A WOMEN'S PETITION FOR INTERNATIONAL SISTERHOOD TO BE PRESENTED AT NAIROBI, 1985

We offer this petition to reaffirm the fundamental humanity of all women, women of many political views, classes and cultures. As we prepare to meet at the United Nations Decade Conference in Nairobi, *we demand the following:*

- *That women not be used as pawns in hunger politics.*
- *That women's bodies be honored and that medical care be for all.*
- *That women shall have the opportunity to reach beyond their own lives through literacy for all women.*
- *That women have an equal role in the governance of this planet.*
- *That the air we breathe be sweet, the seas pure, the forests in foliage.*
- *That sacred to our future survival, "Swords be turned into plow shares." We demand peace and refusal to live with the threat of nuclear annihilation.*

We who have initiated this petition identify ourselves as women, Jews and nationals of the United States. We share a love of justice and ethics with women everywhere, whatever their class, race, religion, sexual preference or ethnic group.

We believe there is more to unite than separate us.

Therefore, let us cross bridges to meet. Let us stand on borders to reach out. Let us translate the unfamiliar into a common tongue. Let us join together in this profound pledge that national quarrels will not distract us from our urgent goals.

We invite all women to join with us. Please sign this petition to symbolize your commitment to the international sisterhood of women.

NAME _____

AFFILIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME _____

AFFILIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME _____

AFFILIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

Send completed petition to
Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Ms. magazine
119 West 40 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10018

OBITUARIES

Dawn Rosset Schuman Nov. 1983 , age 52. Taught classes in Jewish history for organizations and synagogues in the Chicago area, researched and visited surviving Jewish communities in Spain, Northern Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia. In 1975, she won the United Synagogues of America's Solomon Schechter Award for the most outstanding Jewish adult program in the country.

Schuman graduated magna cum laude from Northwestern University. She studied Jewish history under Rabbis Arnold Jacob Wolf and Samuel Dresner and at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

In 1969, she began conducting Brandeis University Extension classes for alumni in the Chicago area. Her teaching branched into ancient, medieval and modern Jewish history.

Her interest often focused on places where only traces are left of once-thriving Jewish communities. She traveled to such locations in Casablanca, Spain, Eastern Europe and several cities in Russia to contact historic Jewish communities and to bring back news of their survival and lifestyles. She conducted history seminars in Russia for "Refuseniks," Jews who have stood up to Soviet authorities.

Schuman was involved in several human rights organizations and served on the board of North Shore Housing Project, one of the first groups to fight for open housing in Illinois. She also was on the boards of the Loop YWCA, the First Women's Bank of Illinois and Camp Henry Horner.

Amy Schuman Adds:

My mother was completely self-educated in Jewish history and Jewish philosophy. She began studying with Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolff one day a week, while raising three children. As the kids required less of her time and energy, she began to teach one class, then two, then four, until she was teaching up to 14 classes each semester, in addition to travelling as a scholar-in-residence and lecturer. She was never part of the Jewish educational "establishment" as she had no title or degree, yet she enjoyed phenomenal success in reaching uncommitted suburban Jews, enabling them to transform their lives through a commitment to Judaism.

Of interest to us, as feminists, are her students. They were mostly suburban homemakers, out for a precious afternoon of intellectual stimulation. In her classes her students were intellectually challenged as nowhere else in their lives. She had them reading Arendt, Kafka, Buber, Heschel, Sachar and writing original papers, and questioning their lifestyles with their weak ties to Judaism. Her students left their classes changed women. Some kashered their homes. Many went back to school, one to a PhD program in Middle Eastern Studies. Dawn's classes filled them with new confidence, and they were changed women who subsequently changed their husbands, children, and friends.

One story: When Dawn was first sick, she went from Chicago to Stanford CA for treatment. She was unsatisfied with merely getting radiotherapy every day (which would cause her to be sick to her stomach and unable to eat or even move on bad days). She wanted to teach! So, through word of mouth and the help of local Jews, she soon had one class, then two. Twice a week she'd throw off the cloaks of nausea and exhaustion, and emerge strong, fiery, a teacher.

Five years later, in 1983, cancer's recurrence sent her back to Stanford for more treatment. I was with her one day and we were wandering the campus somewhat aimlessly, until a middle-aged woman caught sight of us and practically knocked my mother down. "Dawn Schuman!" she cried, 'I can't believe it! It's because of you that I'm here today." She explained that her experiences in Dawn's classes five years back had given her the confidence to go back to school and finish her B.A. degree. "I never knew my own abilities until I studied with you," she said.

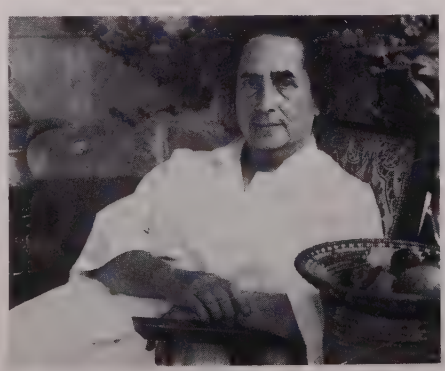
Recha Freier, April, 1984, age 92—Often described as the "unsung heroine of Youth Aliyah," Recha Freier initiated the organization that rescued an estimated 170,000 children from the Nazi claws and has continued to rehabilitate Jewish children from Ethiopia, North Africa, the Soviet Union and Israel's own disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Born in 1892 in Norden, Germany, Freier suffered humiliation in school because of her Jewish background. Even as a child she was keenly aware of growing anti-Semitism in Germany, epitomized by a sign hung at the entrance of the town park which read, "entrance forbidden to dogs and Jews."

Inspired by a pamphlet written by Ber Borochov, the Russian Socialist Zionist thinker, which urged Jews to leave Europe and its persecution and settle in Palestine as farmers and workers, Freier was irresistably drawn to the Zionist cause. "I was fascinated by the possibility," she wrote. "At last there seemed an escape from shame and isolation. I began to dream of an exodus of Jewish youth from Europe to Palestine."

Propelled into action in 1932 by her students' reports that Jews were being fired from their jobs simply because they were Jews, Freier, a teacher, felt "commanded from I do not know where and I felt within myself the certainty of success. I began setting up an organization for planting outcast Jewish youth in Palestine."

She first presented her plan at various Jewish schools, where it was enthusiastically received by students and parents. They suported Freier in seeking the aid of the Vaad Leumi (the Jewish National Council in Palestine) and the World Zionist Organization. The rescued youngsters



were settled in Palestine on the kibbutzim, where they were trained in agricultural skills and guided in their adjustment to their new country. (Freier's book, *Let The Children Come*, chronicles her search for support for the project, as well as the actual resettlement work.)

Henrietta Szold, who has generally and mistakenly been credited with founding Youth Aliyah, initially had doubts about the project, although by 1933 she acknowledged it as a top priority and went on to apply her organizational skills to guiding the movement through its formative years.

The relationship between Freier and Szold was apparently a stormy one, and the differences between them were never reconciled. As Freier recalled, "On the day of her funeral I stayed a long time near the grave. I meditated on the past. She did so much and assumed such an exhausting task. I forgave her and I hope that she forgave me."

In 1940, when her husband, a Berlin rabbi, was expelled from Germany, Freier herself settled in Palestine where she became head of the Agricultural Training Center for Youth in Jerusalem, which educated underprivileged children in kibbutz boarding schools.

Freier was also active in enriching Israeli cultural life. She founded the Israel Composers' Fund in 1957 and sponsored the Israel Testimonium to Support New Israel Composers. She also wrote the texts of two musical plays—"Masada" and "Yerushalayim," published three volumes of prose, and wrote poetry (15 of her poems have been set to music by German composers). In 1975, Freier received an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew University and, in 1981, she was awarded the Israel Prize for her outstanding contributions to the Israeli state and society.

—Sara Kabakow and R.S.F.

Kol Isliah

MAZEL TOV

Seventeen women were ordained as rabbis by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion last spring, 11 in New York and six in Cincinnati.

The 11 New York graduates are: Constance Abrahamson (Brookline MA), Jody Cohen-Gavarian (Springfield NJ), Joan Glazer-Farber (Baltimore), Emily Feigenson (Los Angeles), Carol Glass (Avon CT), Julie Gordon (Albert Lea MN), Susan Harris (Oklahoma City), Stacy Offner (Great Neck NY), Amy Ross Schneiderman (Norfolk CT), Judy Schanks (Phoenix) and Margaret Wenig (Westport CT).

Those ordained in Cincinnati are: Judith Ann Bluestein (Cincinnati), Judith Ann Chessin (Maitland FL), Suzanne Donna Kassel (Salt Lake City), Tracy Guren Klirs (Seattle), Gaylia Rooks (Swampscott MA) and Elizabeth Weiss Stern (Boston).

Appointments

Sandy Averbuch, elected president of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee.

Shoshana Cardin, chosen president of the Council of Jewish Federations.

Sheila Feinstone, the fifth and newest Jewish MP to be elected to the Canadian Parliament.

Rae E. Ginsberg, elected the first woman president of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Boston.

Renana Gutman, a lawyer, elected comptroller of the Jewish Agency.

Charlotte Jacobson, elected Honorary Life Trustee of the United Israel Appeal's Board of Directors, as well as the only woman inducted this year into the Jewish Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Clara Jusidman de Bialostotzky, a prominent sociologist with a doctorate in economics, has become the first Jewish woman to hold a high post in the Mexican government. She now heads the Instituto Nacional Del Comsumidor (INCO), Mexico's institute of consumer affairs.

Lillian Kaplan, elected president of the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot, for a two-year term, the first woman to head a major Jewish denomination.

Hazel Karp, elected president of the Association of Jewish Libraries.

Nancy Leavitt, elected the first woman president of the Worcester Jewish Federation.

Frieda Lewis, President of Hadassah, elected chairperson of the American Section of the World Jewish Congress.

Sheryl M. Livergant, a lawyer, appointed National Hillel Coordinator, B'nai B'rith Canada.

Honors

Claudine Arbusman, Paris fashion designer, won first prize at the fourth World Jewish Song Festival in Montreal, for her song about a young girl seeking her mother, a Holocaust victim.

Chaya Burstein received the William Frank Memorial Children's Literature award, given by JWB Jewish Book Council, for her book, *The Jewish Kids Catalog*.

Bette Howland of Albuquerque NM, a novelist, named a MacArthur Fellow.

Ruth Jordan won a Kenneth Smilen Present Tense Literary Award in the biography/autobiography category for her book, *Daughter of the Waves*.

Barbara Pomerantz won a Kenneth Smilen Present Tense Literary Award, in the juvenile category for her book *Bubby, Me and Memories*.

Esther Roth, former Israeli sprint champion and the first Israeli to reach an Olympic event final, recently presented with the bronze medal in Tel Aviv for her courageous action during the 1972 Munich Olympics, when Palestinian terrorists murdered 11 members of the Israeli team.

Grace Schulman won a Kenneth Smilen Present Tense Literary Award, in the translations category, for *At the Stone of Losses*.

Barbara Streisand awarded NOW's woman of courage award for her movie "Yentl", in which she portrayed a "woman with a passion for learning."

Dara Torres, of Beverly Hills CA, won a gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics as a member of the four-women 400-meter freestyle relay swimming team.

Barbara Walters, the ABC-TV journalist, was recipient of the B'nai B'rith Women Perlman Award for paving the way for women in broadcasting journalism.

Zita Weinshienk, of Colorado, U.S. District Judge, has been named the 1984 recipient of the Anita Perlman Distinguished B'nai B'rith Girls Alumna Award by the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization.

Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, scholar and editor, *Jewish Spectator*, awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion at the HUC's commencement exercises last spring.

Barbara Wolf, editor of the North Shore MA *Jewish Journal*, won a Boris Smolar Award in the Human Interest category for "Looking at History," a two-part account of the "unprecedented storm of controversy" created by the Israeli government's decision following World War II to accept German reparation payments.

Rose Zar won the Association of Jewish Libraries "Best Book" award for her book, *In the Mouth of the Wolf*, published by the Jewish Publication Society. A true story, the book chronicles Zar's escape from the Nazis by masquerading as an Aryan and living among them.

TWO IMPORTANT PROGRAMS FOR AND ABOUT JEWISH WOMEN.

Judaism and Feminism: A New Synthesis

Blu Greenberg, author of *On Women and Judaism* and *How to Run A Traditional Jewish Household* will explore the challenges met by Jewish women today in maintaining the power, beauty and authority of Jewish Tradition in a modern world of feminist ideology and changing sexual roles.

Four Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. Tickets: $6. Subscriptions: $18 for all four. March 5, Male and Female in the Jewish Tradition. March 12, The Rights and Obligations of Jewish Women. March 19, The Limits of Feminism. March 26 Developing a New Synthesis.

The Jewish Woman in Halachah and Aggadah

Dr. Judith Hauptman, author and Assistant Professor of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary, will discuss the Jewish woman's obligation to perform mitzvot (commandments), her status in marriage and divorce, her inability to inherit and her place in the business world in the light of halachic and aggadic teachings from the Talmudic peroid.

This is a Jewish Omnibus Institute. Sunday, March 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (A kosher lunch may be ordered at the Institute).
Temple Israel, 112 East 75th St. (Park and Lexington)
Tickets: $55.

For details call 427-6000, ext. 162.

The 92nd St. Y 1395 Lexington Ave.

92 Y St

A beneficiary of the UJA/Federation Campaign.

Bima

CYNTHIA OZICK

Torah as the Matrix for Feminism

What is feminism? Betty Friedan encapsulates it in a word—the "personhood," she puts it, of women. On that everyone can agree, and it may be that we ought to stop at the definition that promotes agreement. But definitions that may promote *dis*agreement are not without their importance. The revelation implicit in the study of Talmudic method is that, though not all analysis is equal because only one will carry the decision, all analysis is open to view. In that spirit, then, I want to offer a perhaps controversial definition of feminism—but not before taking a Biblical look at an instance of "personhood."

The beginning of "personhood" is not, contrary to what we often hear, that Johnny-come-lately term "humanism." The beginning of personhood lies in Jewish civilization. Without the Jewish *religious* idea—and this I offer without apology to the Marxists—no concept of personhood is possible: it could not have come into the world.

Consider, by way of illustration, Hannah, the mother of Samuel: a heroine of Jewish civilization. She is counted as a heroine because she was a barren woman who prayed to have a child and got one. Now a hard case can be made that none of this is exceptionally heroic, however exceptional the child turned out to be. What it is, in fact, is a story of conformity in an age not very different from our own, an age when woman's personhood is defined by her ability to be the mother of a son. Hannah in her story is a woman of conventional expectation—she wants to have her dignity, and the only way under patriarchy she can aspire to it is through achieving motherhood. Without motherhood she has no personhood—she is nothing. And she is, accordingly, treated as nothing.

She goes up to the House of the Lord and speaks a prayer "in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard"—so immediately, of course, Eli, the man in charge of the House of the Lord, thinks she's a bag lady, a drunk, and advises her to "put away the wine from thee." Well, she certainly *looks* like a drunk, muttering away to herself like that—no woman, after all, is expected to own a spiritual dimension.

And yet is this the only reason Eli is crucially misled? Hannah is not suspected of an act of prayer; she is suspected of an act of drunkenness. Why? It is not only because a woman of no visible prestige is off mumbling in a corner. It is also because the House of the Lord, in this period, has not yet become a *bet tefilah*, a House of Prayer. The synagogue has not yet made its appearance in history, and neither Eli nor anyone else in his world has ever been witness to inward prayer sent out within sacred walls. The Tabernacle, predecessor of the Temple, is a place of high ritual, of incense and animal sacrifice: a summing-up, so to say, of ancient styles of worship, all expressed on one site in one collective voice, so as to bring an end to the multiple loci of such rites, with their temptation toward multiple *genii loci*, or polytheistic backsliding. Until the moment Hannah speaks "in her heart," all liturgical speech in the Tabernacle has been public, representative, communal, a gathering-platform to inculcate a teaching vision of the One Creator.

Hannah is a heroine of religious civilization because she invents, out of her own urgent imagining, inward prayer. Without bringing a sacrifice, without requiring priestly attendance, soaring past every liturgical convention, she rides her words up into the holy air of the House of the Lord; and in that instant she alters forever what we mean by "prayer." Hannah is an originator, a genius of envisioning: she imagines a Lord of History who not only can command event, but who can also listen to a still, small voice; she imagines the power of that still, small voice itself to influence event. On a lesser plane, one might say that she is the inventor of the inward force of psychology.

But the *content* of this inward force is less innovative. Hannah, genius of lyric outcry though she is, originator of prayer-speech though she is, is nevertheless perfectly conventional in her most pressing desire: she wants to do exactly what society expects her to do. She prays to have a son; she prays to own prestige through motherhood. The inventor of prayer is, simultaneous with her genius, a woman obedient to the rules of patriarchy.

Hannah is the first we would take for a religious heroine. She is the last we would take for a feminist heroine. Hannah's gift is incandescent; but there is nothing feminist in her story.

Until we have a look at her husband, Elkanah. He, after all, is living in the same patriarchal society. He has another wife, Peninah, who *does* bear children, and no doubt Hannah is jealous of Peninah because Hannah, in common with her society, cannot conceive of personhood without motherhood. Not so Elkanah. "Hannah," says Elkanah, *"lameh tivki?* Why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am I not

better to thee than ten sons?" Now *nothing* is more valuable in the world of Hannah and Elkanah than a son, and ten sons ten times that—so that in asserting the value of his individual personhood to Hannah, Elkanah is also asserting the value of Hannah's individual personhood to himself, even without the achievement of motherhood. Hannah has value even if she cannot be the instrument of generation.

It is a tremendous metaphysical moment, the earliest declaration of intrinsicness, a new idea of woman, an unconventional idea, a radical idea—metaphysical in the transcendent sense, and also in its nonattachment to physicality. Hannah, cries Elkanah, with or without sons *you have value in yourself!* What Elkanah—a feminist hero found in the first paragraphs of the First Book of Samuel—has discovered in himself is the first principle of feminism: the ethical passion that expresses itself against instrumentality, against woman-as-instrument, against woman-as-the-instrument-of-societal-policy.

It *is* a transcendent moment: it precedes Immanuel Kant's formulation of the same principle by several thousand years. Kant spoke of a Kingdom of Ends: let every human being be treated as an end in herself or himself. Intrinsicness declares itself against instrumentality.

But where does this ethical passion against instrumentality derive from? From the Enlightenment? No, it is older than the Enlightenment. From "humanism"? No, it is older than humanism.

The ethical passion against instrumentality—intrinsicness, "personhood"—derives from the beginning of the beginning of Jewish civilization. We will find it in the first sentence of Chapter Five of the Book of Genesis: The human being is made in the likeness of the Creator.

And this is where I want to offer a view of feminism that is not entirely in consonance with the views of many self-designated feminists today. I want to affirm what I have been repeatedly told is an "old-

fashioned," an obsolete, idea of feminism. I think of it, however, as classical feminism, and consider that departures from classical feminism have been departures from feminism itself. I speak of the idea of feminism as the transcendence of biology. Now we have heard it said again and again in the current mode of corporeal feminism that "biology is a factor." Yes, biology is a factor. How can it not be a factor? Each of us is a kettle of organs; the brain, the seat of human thought, is a mere organ; we are all biological creatures; we are organisms.

But the urgency of classical feminism, which many have forgotten, or ignore, or dissent from, or believe we have evolved from, was precisely the fight against the notion that anatomy is destiny. If anatomy is destiny, then every woman, and every man, is by definition an instrument of blind biology, and the human being no longer lives in the aspiring Kingdom of Ends, but wholly and savagely in the Kingdom of Instrumentality. If feminism is not meant to transcend the biological, then there *is* no feminism. We have heard Jewish "feminists" call for the renewal of New Moon ceremonies as an innovative pursuit for the advancement of Jewish women: is the celebration of the recurrence of the menses feminism, or is it a ceremony honoring instrumentality? We have even heard a call for a technological disclosure that would extend the capacity of women to bear children into old age, as a pursuit of so-called biological equality with men—an ideal, it seems to me, so regressive that it strips Hannah once again of intrinsic value.

Classical feminism took as its starting point two inviolable negative principles: first, that woman was *not* to be considered an instrument for policy goals, whether explicitly of the state or implicitly of the society; and second, that biology was *not* to be the governing motif of a woman's value.

What these negative principles led to was a definition characterized by simplicity, strength, and purity—namely, that feminism means equal access to the great world, access founded in capacity and merit. It means participation in the professions and in the arts, and in every other human enterprise that makes the world go—and all the rest is private life, filled with private choices. For classical feminism, tyranny enters in with the politicization of the personal. For classical feminism, when biology enters in, at that instant feminism ends. In this view, if rape is considered a "women's issue" rather than a societal issue (it is, after all, the crime of a man who victimizes a woman, and might better be termed a "men's issue"), if abortion is considered a "women's issue" rather than a societal issue, if day care is introduced solely as a "women's issue" rather than a societal concern, what all that marks is not the beginning of a wider feminist arena, but the erosion, at its absolute center, of feminism itself.

The idea of classical feminism was to bring an end to the segregation of women; to the notion of women as a separate class or species with a separate outlook, a separate psychology, a separate destiny. In this view, insofar as emphasis on segregation and psychological separateness is promulgated, to that extent is feminism eroded.

What is the source for this uncompromising exclusion of the biological?

The source is the great feminist source itself, the first source in the history of all civilization to declare against instrumentality and for the Kingdom of Ends—and that is Genesis, Chapter Five, Verse One: those words about being made in the likeness of the Creator.

In the Jewish vision, the Creator *has* no likeness in any terms that human beings can see or know or imagine. The Creator is an imagining of the unimaginable. The revolution in the Jewish idea is that the Creator is not an incarnation, neither of man nor woman nor beast nor of anything else that can be found in biological reality. Since the beginning of the history of the world, there is no other religious vision on the planet, from animism straight through Zoroastrianism—that's A to Z—that does not incarnate or image divinity in physical or biological reality. In the Jewish vision, and only in the Jewish vision, the nature of the Creator is dissociated utterly from the biological: because the biological is the fount and origin of instrumentality.

For Jews, to be made in the likeness of the Creator means that you may not be made into the likeness of anything or anybody else; that no one may fashion you into an instrument for his or her own use.

This is the power of Torah—that it declares against instrumentality.

And if Torah itself declares against instrumentality, then it is clear that Torah in itself may not be made into an instrument; that the rabbis are obliged to serve the Torah, not that the Torah is to serve as an instrument of the rabbis; that the rabbis are obliged to express the soul of the Torah, not that the Torah is obliged to express the soul of the rabbis. To put it otherwise: religion must be kept clear of the infiltration of transient politics.

The so-called secularists may ask: well, and is there ever a time when there is a congruence between the soul of the rabbis and the soul of Torah—a time when the rabbinate is *not* politicized, when religious values are not hierarchical?

The student of Jewish history will reply: yes; and yes; and yes again. Intrinsicness is precisely the theme of Jewish history.

We are met in Jerusalem, in this city luminous with holy continuity, because of Jewish steadfastness and Jewish intrinsicness, because every day in every generation there were those, women and men, who passionately and yearningly pronounced the name of Jerusalem. This happened because Torah entered the souls of some rabbinical spirits and some Zionist spirits and some who were only of the plain follower-tribe of Israel. "We will no longer be buffeted, we will no longer be the instruments of the policies of others," said the soul of the Jewish people, set in the likeness of the Creator.

And now it is the turn of Jewish women to say the same.

I want to dare to observe that if Jewish feminism does not emerge from Torah, it will disintegrate. For Jews the Enlightenment is an idol that will not serve women as it did not serve Jews; Voltaire was an anti-Semite. For Jews humanism is an idol that will not serve women as it does not serve Jews: in the West it is mainly the self-declared humanists who stand in the gutter with other Jew-haters to support Arafat.

Those who say that Torah offers only "male models," forget that justice is neither male nor female, but an idea; and ideas have no anatomy.

Those who say that Torah as a source of feminism cannot possibly appeal to them because religion is the opiate of the people are themselves opium-eaters who have shut out insight into the origins of ethical civilization. They lack the moral imagination.

"Woman as Jew, Jew as Woman."

Now let us add to these: Torah as feminism, feminism as Torah. ■

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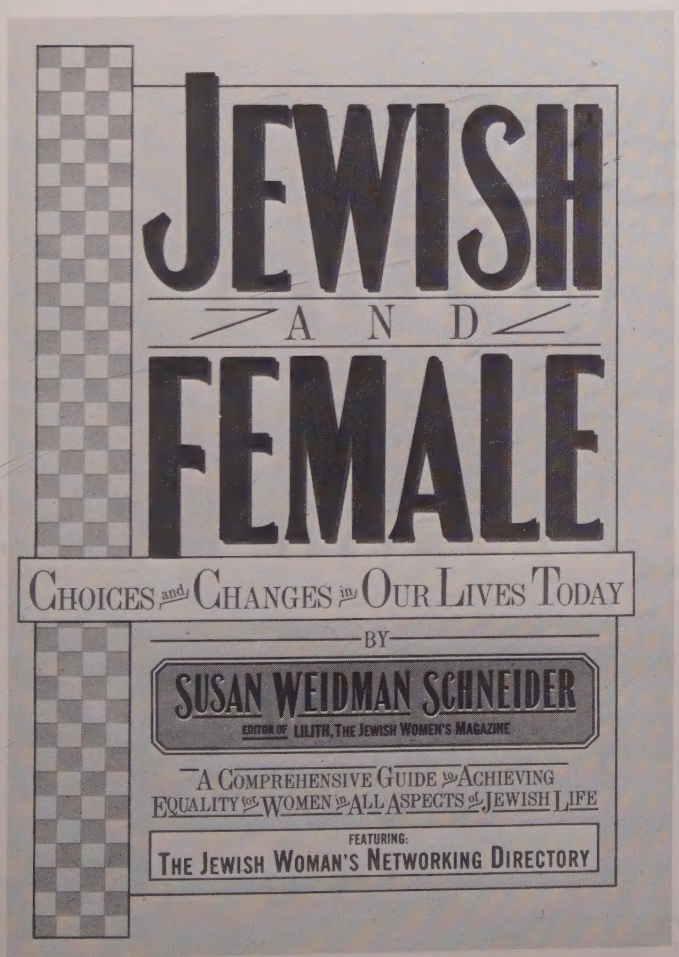
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